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THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 124 NOVEMBER 2009

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# If Only Super DJ Were Here...

**A**s I write each of these introductory Track Ones, I always try to explain the theme of the issue, and maybe try to set it in a broader context or point out something important within the text (or sometimes just ramble). This time around, I noticed an interesting thread tying many of the stories together, and even stringing its way from issue to issue over the last few years.

In cartoon terms, it's the contrast between the superhero and the mere mortal. Superman has super-human strength due to his origins on a distant planet; his alter-ego, designed to help him blend in with regular humanity, is the mild-mannered and somewhat awkward Clark Kent. Here in this issue, we're having a little fun and using the imaginary figure of Super DJ to represent the difference between the true professional and the complete amateur, or even the wannabe DJ.

Although no DJ that I know actually has super powers, I certainly know entertainers who function on a completely different, elevated plane of performance, when compared with others. They do some of the things mentioned in the following pages:



They "pump up" their performance capabilities by constantly self-analyzing and learning (as described by the DJ Coach, Paul Kida). They distinguish themselves from the crowd by being the most effective MCs possible—and they get rewarded for it (as Tom Haibeck shows). They stay at the cutting edge of the culture, to make sure that ever-changing trends in technology don't leave them wondering why they no longer connect with audiences (as outlined by Mike Ficher). They keep their primary personal tools, such as speaking skills, as sharp as possible, often looking for objective observers to point out where they need improvement (as Mike "Dr. F." Ryan makes clear in his description of Toastmasters). They realize that being a super DJ will often require the assistance of a "trustworthy sidekick," à la Batman's Robin, in order to best serve the needs of clients and audiences (as exemplified in the mitzvah motivators described by DJ DAYna). And they always arrive ready to deal with whatever unexpected problem might arise, sometimes using their training and wits to actually save the day (which Jody Litten outlines so vividly for us).

While there may be the rare exception (see "Magical Musical List" on page 42), most of the time mobile entertainers armed with tried and tested party tunes, reliable gear (be it the traditional or the new digital) and most importantly, super performance skills will be the true heroes of the day, making the wedding reception or bar mitzvah or club set or corporate training session a success by doing just what is needed to get the audience involved in the event. I feel sorry for those trapped at the party "hosted" by cousin Fred (see Mark Johnson's "Reality Check" on page 56) and his iPod, where all they can do is look around uncomfortably and wonder out loud "If only Super DJ were here..."

*Dan Walsh, Editor-In-Chief*

NOVEMBER 2009  
**MOBILE BEAT**  
ISSUE No. 124

Publisher

**Ryan Burger - ProDJ Publishing**

Editor in Chief

**Dan Walsh**

Art Director

**Adam M. Rothberg**

Circulation Manager

**Kitty Harr**

Gear Guide Coordinator

**Jake Feldman**

Sales, Conferences, and Events Group Director

**Michael Buonaccorso**

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Jay Maxwell • Mike Ficher • Stu Chisholm

DJ DAYna • Andy "Cubbie" Powell • Marc Andrews

Mark Johnson • Mike "Dr. Frankenstand" Ryan • Jody Litten

Charles E. Snyder III • Tom Haibeck • John Stiernberg

Rick Ellis • Paul Kida, The DJ Coach • Gerald Johnson

Anthony Barthel, Special Editorial Consultant • Thomas Edison

## HOW TO REACH MOBILE BEAT:

Tel: 515-986-3300 • Fax: 515-986-3344

E-mail: [webmaster@mobilebeat.com](mailto:webmaster@mobilebeat.com)

Web: [www.mobilebeat.com](http://www.mobilebeat.com)

For subscriptions, address changes or back issues go to [www.mobilebeat.com](http://www.mobilebeat.com) or contact *Mobile Beat* by mail at: P.O. Box 42365, Urbandale, IA 50323

Back issues of *Mobile Beat* (if available)

\$5 (in Canada: \$6, US funds)

Shipping address:

ProDJ Publishing • 807 N. Park • Grimes, IA 50111

*Mobile Beat* (ISSN# 1058-0212) is published by:

ProDJ Publishing (BC Productions, Inc.)

P.O. Box 42365, Des Moines, IA 50323

January, March, May, July, September,

November, December (7 issues per year).

Ground shipments to: 807 N. Park • Grimes, IA 50111

Periodical postage paid at Grimes, IA and additional mailing locations.

Subscription rates:

US and possessions: \$25 for 1 year, \$45 for 2 years and \$65 for 3 years. Canada: \$35 for 1 year, \$65 for 2 years and \$95 for 3 years. All other countries: \$60 per year.

Subscriptions outside the U.S. must be paid in U.S. currency.

Postmaster – Send address changes to:

*Mobile Beat* • P.O. Box 309 • East Rochester, NY 14445

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All advertising material subject to publisher's approval.

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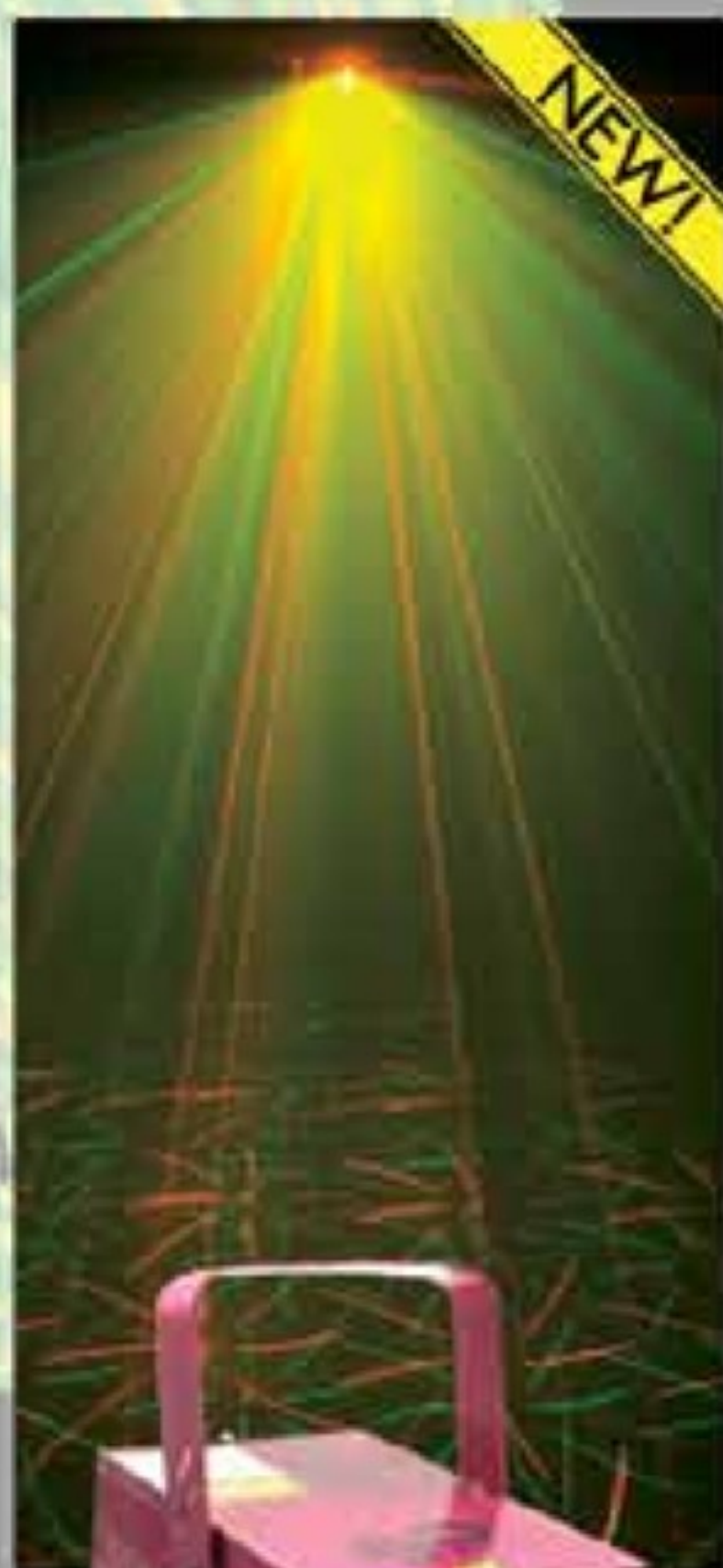
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# One More for the Road

BY JAKE FELDMAN

**T**aking a summer tour has been a way to preach the gospel to the faithful for decades. Back when Elvis, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, and Jerry Lee Lewis traveled together, it was in a caravan of cars and they were singing about "great balls of fire" and being "all shook up" and they used this experience to grow their perspective "brands." Then came the age of touring in custom buses and the idea of an artist traveling the country playing a series of events designed both to see as many fans as possible and recoup their recording costs.

And now there's Mobile Beat: traversing the country for the first time this summer in a series of 15 events designed to instill a higher level of professionalism into the national DJ Industry. With us, we brought along tour sponsors Pioneer ProDJ, the American Disc Jockey Association, DigiGames, QSC, Froggy's Fog, Odyssey Innovative Designs, RPM Top Hits, Open Air Photo Booth, Frankenstand, and X-Laser.

Even if you might not have come to the shows, you still might have seen us. We set out in "Mobile Beat 1" (a truck totally customized by Pioneer ProDJ) on August 7th and did not roll

back into headquarters until almost a month later. During that time, we traveled over 8,000 miles and saw over a thousand smiling faces—many of which had never been to a DJ business event, much less made the trek to Mobile Beat Las Vegas. Each event was free and combined a taste of the Vegas show with the added bonus of convenience; every event was held in the evening (Sunday through Wednesday, most at Dave & Buster's) and PCDJ even provided the food for the whole tour!

Logistically nothing like this has been attempted in the DJ Industry before, and we were met with overwhelming support. The first night in Phoenix, for example, attendees arrived at the Dave & Busters not quite knowing what to expect. Then we were having a great night of education, demonstrations, and networking with a packed room...but during the final presentation the power gave out in the entire building. And though I cannot explain to you how eerie the sight of the midway outside the showroom was, I can tell you that the crowd stayed and enjoyed.

From there we were off to San Diego and Orange. In San Diego we received extraordinary support from local ADJA chapter, headed up by Ken Day. Other highlights include the extremely large attendance in LA (largest of tour) and the strong showing in the Bay Area, thanks in large part to extra promotion by Robert Kusters and the local ADJA.

On the second leg, Ryan Burger, Mobile Beat Publisher, joined up with the tour. The winners for best stops on this leg were Detroit and Pittsburgh, where the stops were phenomenal. Detroit was the second-most-highly-attended tour stop and was under the wise leadership of local ADJA President (and Start.Prod.com moderator) Mark Evans, who worked his tail off promoting and helping the event. In Pittsburgh, Gordon



## MB TOUR SPEAKERS

### 1st Leg:

- Andy Ebon - Utilizing Social Networking and New Social Media (Facebook, etc.)
- Scott Faver - Networking (Ideas and tips)
- David Van Enger - Wedding Twists and Ideas

### 2nd Leg:

- Andy Ebon - (same)
- Jim Cerone - The Perfect Host (Ways to make yourself a better MC and Entertainer)
- Dan Goldsmith - Distinctive Lighting Upsells (making a little lighting investment into a big return for your company)

### 3rd Leg:

- Dan Goldsmith - (same)
- Doug Sandler - Working Smarter/Not Harder (Growing your business through people skills)
- Ken Cosco - Interactive Games and Dances

### 4th Leg:

- Dr. Drax - Technology and the 24th Century (Making cutting-edge technology work for you)
- Danny Brewer - 10 Steps to Running a Successful DJ business (The many hats an owner wears and ways to be more efficient)
- Tom Haibeck - The Wedding MC (Things to avoid and tips for success)



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Jim

Slagle and his great local ADJA chapter's dedication to the bettering the industry was impressive. The Northeast trip was anchored by the Boston stop that was well represented by Aldridge's local ADJA chapter, which coincidentally brought out one of the most responsive crowds of the tour. We were once again treated to Dan Goldsmith's presentation as well as seeing the sights, sounds, and smells of the oldest area of our nation. Special thanks go to John Rozz who, as the master of Simon Says, treated us all to a live version of the instructions found in his new book Icebreakers at the Boston stop.

Then came the last leg, and the folks in the Charlotte, North Carolina ADJA chapter (led by Brian Hines) deserve a ton of credit for making the last leg of this year's tour start off with a bang. In terms of being on top of everything and getting the word out, Charlotte was perhaps

the grand champion among all the chapters. Tampa (Doug Shaw and crew) should also get an honorable mention for their hard work, as they helped the "touring crew" consisting of myself, Rob Johnson, and Rick Ellis rock through the final night.

And so here we are at tour's end: 8,000 miles burned, some great new friends made, and a few lessons learned. For those of us who were on the entire trip (and it was a trip!)—myself, Rob Johnson of DigiGames, and Nick Andrews of Open Air Photo Booth—we came, we saw...we educated.

For those who weren't on the tour or didn't come see us, no explanation on any chat board will make up for the free education, networking, and fun you missed. Check the list in the sidebar for the great seminars and speakers that were featured. Also, a recap video is available at [www.mobilebeat.com/mb-tour](http://www.mobilebeat.com/mb-tour). Check it out.

And for more information on next years tour, or to organize an event in your area, please see the adjacent article on next year's tour—and don't forget to keep checking Mobilebeat.com for more information and updates. **MB**

## WILL THE 2010 MB TOUR STOP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Minneapolis? Kansas City? St. Louis? Dallas? Houston? These are some of the cities we've heard from that were disappointed that the 2009 Mobile Beat - Pioneer ProDJ Tour 2009 didn't pay a visit. Well, in 2010 it's up to you. Some of this year's most successful stops were those with strong local backing.

Get together as a group, an ADJA chapter, or other local association and make a request to us as to bringing next year's roadshow to your neighborhood. Please email Mike Buonaccorso, Trade Show and Tour Producer, at [mb@mobilebeat.com](mailto:mb@mobilebeat.com) expressing your interest and we will send you the requirements to make it happen. 2009 cities are eligible for a repeat visit!

Inquiries will be accepted through December 15th at [mb@mobilebeat.com](mailto:mb@mobilebeat.com), then watch for the announcement of the Mobile Beat 2010 itinerary.



## THE TOUR WAS JUST A TASTE THE BIG SHOW IS COMING SOON

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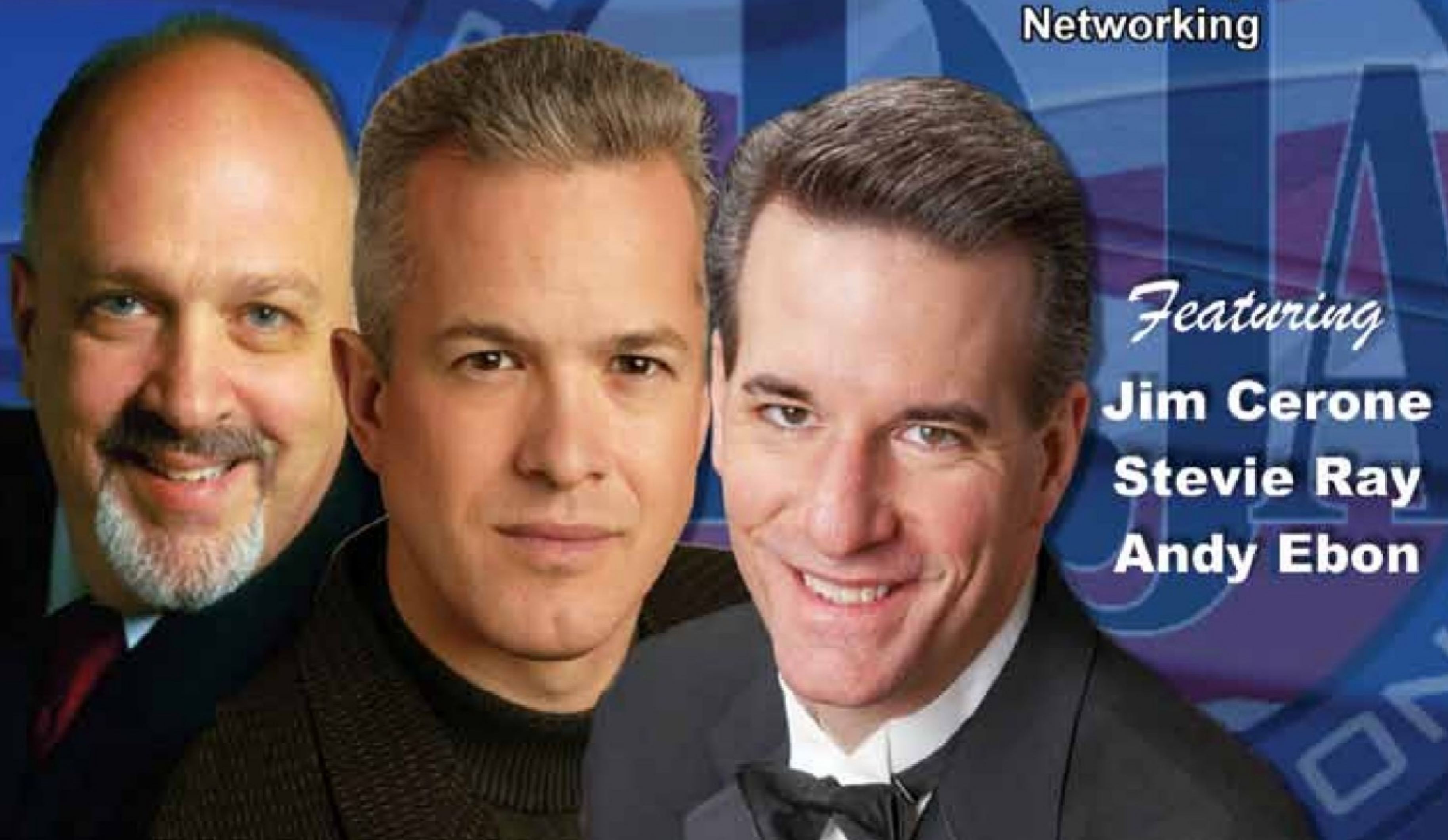
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## Keep on the Cutting Edge of Karaoke



**A**cesonic has announced the release of the **DGX-210**, a full-function, **multi-format player** with the ability to record and convert CD+G format to MP3+G—the first player in the world with this unique and convenient feature. It also retains all of the great features past Acasonic players, including vocal recording, a built-in mixer with microphone inputs, digital key control, scoring games and much more.

But perhaps most impressive—with so much cutting-edge karaoke technology, smart

design and quality workmanship packed into a single unit—is the surprisingly low retail price tag of only \$109—affordable for pro KJs, sing-along enthusiasts, and holiday gift-givers alike.

Another notable new feature of the DGX-210 is its ability to play MP3+G format from a variety of media, including discs, flash drives, external hard drives and SD cards. Because of its small file size and accessibility, the MP3+G format (MP3 audio plus a graphics track to visually display the lyrics) has become increasingly

popular among karaoke users. Users can download karaoke songs in MP3+G, transfer them to flash drives or SD cards, or burn them onto discs. So no matter what medium the songs are on, the DGX-210 can play it.

"The DGX-210 is undoubtedly our most complete, well-rounded player to date," says Acasonic founder David Su, "with some really excellent new features that no other player in the market has, and yet it's still very friendly on the pocketbook." Holiday shoppers, take note. [www.acesonic.com](http://www.acesonic.com)

## EXCITING LIGHTING COMBOS, BAR NONE

**American DJ** is not only raising the bar on excitement and value in DJ/club effects, it's extending the bar too—by debuting three new DMX-compatible lighting fixtures shaped like elongated bars (21.25" L). Each contains at least three exciting visual effects, thus their name: the **ADJ Fusion Series**.

Compact and affordable, the three new offerings include the **Fusion FX Bar 2**, **Fusion FX Bar 3**, and **Fusion FX Bar 4**. The Fusion FX Bar 2 features three different effects: a red, green and blue LED color wash; a colored LED moonflower; and a white LED moonflower. There are a total of five effects on the Fusion FX Bar 3: one bright white LED wash/strobe effect; and four hard beam white pinspots. The Fusion FX Bar 4 includes a white LED wash/strobe effect; a tri-color LED moonflower; and a green laser effect. The Fusion FX Bars build on the dramatic success of a previous multi-effects unit, the Fusion Scan 250 EX, which paired a DMX scanner with a laser diode effect.

Although they're fully DMX-equipped, the



units can also be run as sound-active effects without a controller. All of the bars come with an easy-to-navigate, onboard menu system with a bright display. Multiple units can be linked together master-slave to cover larger areas. ADJ's universal UC3 remote controller (sold separately) gives users command over basic functions like Blackout, Strobe and Sound-Active Mode.

Long-life LEDs will let each Fusion FX Bar run for 50,000 hours, minimizing the hassle and expense of lamp replacement. For further details on each Fusion FX Bar, go to [www.americandj.com](http://www.americandj.com).

## BUILDING A BRILLIANT SHOW WITH COLORED BLOCKS

The **COLORdash Block** is a compact wash fixture from **CHAUVET** that provides an impressively high-power output with four separate clusters of LEDs to produce an infinite array of colors. It comes with seven operating modes and full color



mixing with or without DMX control. DJs can use it as a wash light or take control of each pod individually and create stunning direct view effects by selecting built-in automated programs or creating a customized show. Customized programs can be transferred to up to 10 fixtures at a time via master/slave or DMX.

The rectangular light housing contains 28 compact 1W LEDs packed in its four pods. Each pod contains seven LEDs—2 red, 2 green, 2 blue and 1 white—that provide an output of 1,690 @ 2m, with a beam angle of 17 degrees (field angle is 32 degrees).

Thanks to its white LEDs, this unit offers a virtually limitless range of colors, including pastels and true white.

The COLORdash Block weighs just 4.4 pounds (1.9Kg), making it easy to install or stow. The units can be back-mounted to a wall or hung on a truss. The double-bracket yoke also serves as a floor stand. [www.chauvetlighting.com](http://www.chauvetlighting.com)

## CURTAIN OF LIGHT

**OmniSistem** is pleased to announce the arrival of the **StarBrite**, one of the brightest and most feature-laden **LED curtains** in their product line and in the market at large. Manufactured by PR Lighting, LTD, the StarBrite is IP rated, utilizes SMD technology in its 144 LEDs and is designed to meet the performance demands of even the most challenging applications. The LED drop is operated by its dedicated controller which comes with 12 preset programs and is capable of driving four StarBrites at once. The controller is also DMX-compatible which allows for the strobe and dimming functions of the LEDs and features a key-press lock button to prevent improper operation.

With an operating life of 30,000 hours, a luminous intensity up to 150 candelas (when all LEDs are white) and a power consumption of 30W, the StarBrite has been designed for high performance and long operational life. The LED cloth measures 20' x 13' (600cm x 400cm) and weighs 44 lbs. Numerous StarBrites can be joined together with Velcro straps to create a curtain of any size. The StarBrite comes packed in a professional flight case on casters for convenient storage and transport. [www.omnisistem.com](http://www.omnisistem.com)







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# Under the Radar: A Secret Weapon for Software-Toting DJs

Stealth Control from Numark: sleek, strong and keeping you in firm control

BY GERALD JOHNSON

**H**aving read about Numark's upcoming 2009 product releases back in January (during the NAMM trade show), when Stealth Control made its way to my warehouse I was already excited about the prospects of my first review for the 'Beat. What I found was a straightforward, good looking, plug-and-play controller that actually took longer to review than was originally planned—but I'll get to that later.

## THE BASICS

Stealth Control gets its name from its finish, which resembles the special radar-proof coating of the its namesake jet fighters and bombers. While this unit is not as expensive as a jet (around \$300), it can certainly be a source of security while DJing with a computer. It is also an efficient alternative to working with a mouse and a keyboard. Simply saying that this unit is "sleek looking" would not suffice; however, to borrow a line from This Is Spinal Tap, this unit can get "none more black."

The controller operates on either Mac or PC



platforms and comes bundled with Traktor LE and Mixmeister Fusion Live software. Additionally, other programs may be used, but I've always found it easiest to use controllers with recommended software that makes setup a lot easier. If you do, however, have another program that you would like to use with Stealth, Numark has probably got you covered with easily installed drivers located on their website.

As a dual-channel control unit, the setup is simple: one USB 2.0 cable into your computer. Stealth is strictly a controller, so the sound output will still be from your normal computer/external soundcard setup. Through that USB cable MIDI enables any control, sound effects, and track navigation—completely negating the use of a mouse, if one possesses a highly organized music collection.

## THE SPECIFICS

Part of being stealthy is the ability to look the part, but still make your presence known, if necessary. In this instance the controller is black, but the buttons possess a red LED outline that provides visibility in darkened halls and nightclubs. With over 31 buttons, 5 faders, and 20 knobs, one could say that Stealth earns its name as a "controller."

Along with this ample control surface, Stealth Control displays an overall ruggedness of design. Obviously mobile DJs travel from venue to venue and show to show—therefore they need metal-housed units with firm and reliable controls in a package designed for the road; this hardware interface fits the bill.

Each channel boasts tri-band EQ control and pitch bend, tempo control, and key adjustment (making it take on the feel of a DJ "battle" style mixer). The software programs provided also offer effects that are also easily manipulated through the hardware interface. Lastly, and perhaps most important for me when working with my laptop, is the

looping and cue functions that make it easy to create grand intros, special dances, and seamless "beds" to talk over.

## THE GIGS

I'm mostly a wedding guy who does a few corporate events. So when I brought out Stealth Control as part of my setup, it fit perfectly with my current mantra of "lighter and tighter"—meaning lighter gear packed into a smaller vehicle. With this unit I was able to operate just on my laptop with the Stealth for control and an additional laptop running sans controller for backup (all routed through a single space mixer for connect-ability/mic input). It is with this setup that I could really see the tremendous attributes that Stealth possesses. First, the unit has a small physical footprint (that works well on the front of a table). Second, it matched the black of my laptops and my "low key/blend in" look. Last, but most importantly, Stealth performed flawlessly at every event where it was "in control."

## THE DEAL

Earlier in the article I mentioned the unusual length in which I took to write this article, and that's because of my fondness for the unit. And though I do wish there Stealth Control a couple more features, such as a built-in sound card and microphone input—eliminating the need for a mixer—I do understand that Numark has come out with another unit with just that in mind, calling it the Omni Control (which you will find also reviewed in this issue).

Lastly, I also recommend getting the carrying case for the controller, as it does have a tendency, with its hard shell, to get scratched up in transport. That being said, I enjoyed my time with the Stealth Control and was sad when I had to return it to Numark. Hopefully this won't be the last covert operation I undertake with Stealth. **MB**

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# EKS Marks the Spot for DJ Control

The EKS Otus Controller offers a broad palette of control to help unleash your creativity

BY CHARLES E. SNYDER III

**F**or the past several years, the digital media controller market has been dominated by those mostly designed for the mobile DJ. Sure there have been contributions for the club DJ too, from some of the most notable brands, but few have taken it to the level that EKS has with the new Otus Controller. Welcome to the next generation of mixing it up with your computerized performance system (CPS).

## STRONG FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Pulling this new controller out of the box, the first thing that caught my attention was its weight. It has a sturdy all-aluminum frame, so it has some heft to it, unlike the Tupperware construction of many other controllers. The added weight and rubber cleats help to keep it firmly in place for some real maniacal mixing.

The second feature that stood out immediately was the huge 7.5" jog wheel that is nearly the size of an old 45 RPM record. The tactile feel of the wheel is nice and smooth too, without a lot of free spin to it. Another nice feature is that the wheel is also brightly illuminated, making it very nice to work with in low-light situations, typical of most club lighting conditions. Additionally, you can adjust the sensitivity level of the wheel to suit your needs on the fly, making it a precise, almost surgical instrument.

Last but not least, the next thing that you will notice about the Otus is the sheer number of additional onboard controls that are also LED illuminated. With the flexibility of this controller and the multitude of multi-layer controls, you will likely find yourself wishing that your toes were ambidextrous too!

## LOTS OF OPTIONS

The Otus Controller is surprisingly flexible, giving you the freedom to work with just about any software of you'd like. To get you started right out of the box, it comes bundled with EKS Bison DJ software. This is a full-screen program for the Windows platform featuring a simple, streamlined interface that is easy to use.

The Otus can be used in conjunction with a mixer, an internal or external soundcard, and even another controller; or it can just as easily replace any or all of them, depending on your setup needs. Solid ASIO (Audio Stream Input/Output) drivers provide the best possible sound reproduction, and flexible MIDI routing allows for incredibly creative setups that are still very easy to configure.

Once the controller is connected to your CPS via a standard USB cable, you will have to install the MIDI and ASIO software obtained by visiting the EKS website at <http://eks.fi>, after registering to gain access to the "Downloads and Updates" section.

However, one of the most important features of this controller is that





it completely replaces the need for a keyboard and mouse. The wide range of controls gives the Otus user an unprecedented amount of control—something that has been consistently missing from other types of controllers for the club jock. The Otus design team clearly spent a lot of time optimizing the layout for usability as well as the eye-candy factor. The most used controls are placed closest to the operator, allowing for quick adjustments with little effort. The other functions, such as effects, are placed further away since they tend to be used less often; this also allows your audience to see you actually working when you stretch for the knobs.

Another important aspect of this wide-ranging control setup is that it helps make the Otus future proof. Without getting into all of the technical jargon, the controller also features assignable controls that virtually double the ability of the controller, practically making it two decks in one unit. Doubled or layered controls are easily identifiable by the color of the LED indicators.

Yet another level of control is provided by the touch-sensitive pads that are included on the unit—the coolest feature, in my opinion. First there is the 80mm pitch ribbon which replaces the typical slider or knob controls and is capable of highly accurate pitch adjustments. The scale can even be toggled by hitting the scale button, making it easy to get a precise pitch setting. This is visually confirmed by the series of LEDs running parallel to the slider touch pad. Second is the main touch pad, which replaces the need for a computer mouse. It also serves a dual purpose too with the layered controls: It can act as a user-defined X/Y effects control.

Last but certainly not least, the unit also features an integrated sound card with dual analog line-level outputs, as well as dual S/PDIF digital outputs. This also includes one 1/4" stereo headphone jack for easily monitoring or setting cue points.

## CONCLUSION

The EKS Otus offers DJs a unique, stylish, and most importantly, an extremely flexible controller—a mouse-less, keyboard-less way to command your CPS. If you are looking for very hands-on device to make your mixing more enjoyable for you and more entertaining for your audiences, the Otus might be EKSactly what you're looking for. **MB**

<http://eks.fi>

## PERTINENT DATA

The EKS Otus is compatible with Windows, Mac OSX and Linux operating systems. It supports ASIO, advanced MIDI mapping, including any software that is capable of "MIDI learn," and is USB 2.0 compliant.

The controls consist of a high resolution 7.5" jog wheel that is touch sensitive and has position/speed LED indicators. There are 4 jog dial type controls with a switch, 17 low-travel buttons, 6 touch buttons, 10 assignable control knobs, a built-in touchpad for mouse control that is assignable as an X/Y effects control, an 80mm touch sensitive pitch slider with position LEDs and all controls are backlit by LEDs.

The audio interface is an integrated 24-bit, 6-channel audio card with a frequency response of 4Hz to 24KHz. Connectors include four RCA analog outs (two stereo pairs), two S/PDIF (digital) outs, a 1/4" headphone jack, and a powered USB 2.0 port.

## EKS-CESSORIES

What would a good controller or any other piece of equipment be without some swag to go with it? Well the folks at EKS also offer the Otus Bag (by UDG), which is specifically designed to carry a laptop, the Otus, a pair of headphones and some patch cables. Check out the EKS website, <http://eks.fi>, for info on purchasing the unit and accessories, either directly or from a local reseller.



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# Express Delivery

In this ProDJ File we talk to Todd and Heather Davis, who run Sound Express Mobile Entertainment, in Modesto, California, serving all of Central California, about their company, working together as a couple, the continuing importance of face time at bridal fairs despite Facebook, and other topics.

**Ryan Burger:** Todd, tell us a little bit about how Sound Express started and how you got involved. I understand you didn't start the business, but you took it over after a while...

**Todd Davis:** Okay. The business was founded by a photographer in the 1980s, who happened to be one of the larger photographers in the Central Valley. His brother-in-law was actually the DJ. So when the band situation came to an end and the DJs were becoming more and more popular, they formed Denny's Rocking Sound Express. I actually was married once before and at my wedding the DJ was Paul, who was the DJ for Sound Express and he felt very confident about my Type A personality and how I am and decided to give me a call a little while later and ask me if I wanted to join him, as he bought the company from his brother-in-law.

So Paul became the owner and I worked with Paul for about six years running a two-system service. We were the two DJs. That's kind of when the big DJ boom hit there. We became quite popular. There are only four companies here in the Central Valley. About six years into it, Paul decided to take a job with a publishing company and offered to sell me the DJ systems.

For a time I worked for Budweiser, Anheuser-Busch and DJed on the side. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to be a full-time DJ. So about 6 months, maybe a year into it, I quit my job and never looked back.

**RB:** Took the big gamble?

**TD:** Took the big gamble.

**RB:** Tell us how things progressed a little bit from there, Heather. When did you get involved in this whole mix?

**Heather Davis:** In November of '98...But I met Todd in—what year, Todd, '95?

**TD:** '95, yeah...I met Heather at a wedding reception where the cake lady came, brought the cake, closed up the hall; nobody turned the air conditioner on and the cake fell over...And then when Heather and I and her mom arrived with a friend of the family, you know we all tried to scramble



Todd Davis, center, flanked by his A-team of DJs.



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and get the cake picked up off the floor...so that's how we originally met. [We ended up getting married] on New Year's Eve, for the Millennium. So we were actually married for '99-2000 at the stroke of midnight.

**RB:** *This is the first time I've interviewed a couple that's in the mobile company together. I'm sure the responsibilities of the family take time for both of you heavily. But what's your involvement currently with the business?*

**HD:** Currently with the business, I do most of Todd's paperwork. I'm more of the—I do not have the Type A personality that Todd has, so I'm more behind the scenes...In the office I do a lot of the paperwork, a lot of his mailers, a lot of the banking, the e-mailing, talking. I do speak with the brides, in that respect. I'm as involved as he is, up to the point of actually going out and DJing. That part of it, I leave to him.

**RB:** *According to your website, you're heavily into wedding receptions. Do you still do much in the way of the bar business or school dance...what type of things do you guys do outside of the wedding scene?*

**TD:** Well, we split our company about 10 years ago into three separate divisions. We started doing live sound for the radio stations by accident. I actually bought a live sound PA that we were going to tear up and make into another DJ rig and a radio station called me in a panic and needed some help. And I enjoyed running sound, so actually got some education; I went on the road with a gentleman who was a sound engineer and learned the business. And now we've grown to the point we've been lucky enough to do sound for Chad Brock, Chris Cagle, Craig Morgan; Adele, who just won the two Grammys. We just did Sugar Ray the other day. So we have been able to expand where we do about 60 live sound shows a year now.

...We still have the division that runs the night clubs. We do more than entertainment director for our clubs. We come in, look at what's wrong... how to change some of the things that we're doing on a regular basis to continue to grow...more than just a DJ who shows up, does the music, and goes home...

My oldest son is 16. He's a freshman here at a local high school here, so we've become really involved with the schools...We see a lot of high school kids coming in under the age of 21...We want to get those kids back into the school dances. So we've actually put a program together to create more of a night club atmosphere for dances, make it more interactive, bigger sound system, bigger light shows; and give a little bit back to the schools and work a little cheaper to work within their budget...

[One] school went from 20 kids at the homecoming dance the year I took over, to last year when we had 500 at the homecoming dance. The school only had 600 kids eligible to go to the dance. So we're at about 90 percent. So, it's a good program. Besides the weddings, we do a lot of schools, a lot of junior high schools...

[We also] do a lot of corporate events. Even in today's economy, they're cutting back a little bit, but there's still quite a few things going on within that world. But we do a lot of wine tastings with restaurants and cookie demonstrations, using our music and microphones and lighting and video screen to keep us working...

**RB:** *When you personally roll out on wedding receptions, what do you like to work with? What kind of platform do you use?*

**TD:** Most of the DJ rigs that we have are all American Audio mixing boards, as well as the CD players. We use QSC amplifiers pretty much throughout all of our equipment. And then, speakers we've been using a lot of JBL and E-V products, I really like the E-V products. All our live sound rigs are all E-V products, monitors, mains, amps, crossovers, and so on.

Then myself, I've actually gotten into using the laptop but I use the Numark Cue system with the new iCBX system...I have the ability to use the laptop with music at my fingertips and not lugging CDs like I used to. But if I have a problem with the hard drive or the laptop, I'm able to go right to the iCBX and frontload CDs. So I keep the CDs in my trailer, including the Mobile Beat 200 set, which I still carry to this day.

**RB:** *Without giving away your secrets to your local competitors, what have been some of the most successful things you've done in the last year or so to bring in new business?*

**TD:** Well, the best thing that's worked for us is we joined forces with California Bridal Events...We use Facebook, Twitter...we use the Internet...That's the primary place they're searching for us. But they want to come and see you too. So as a partner of California Bridal Events we're able to host and MC all the fashion shows, run all the sound for the entire bridal show, and that, I tell you, is still the key. Get on stage and let them see what you do, and then in the booth talking to them, face to face shaking their hands...We see a lot of people within the wedding industry going away from the bridal shows. They're not marketing the list after the fact. That's the key—what do you do after that show: the mailers and the e-mail hits.

We're hosting small seminars on what you need to know to hire professionals. We're using those lists. Bringing them into our commercial office. We have a little room that holds about 60 people. We have PowerPoint presentations with different professionals within the industry: photographers, videographers, limousines drivers, cake ladies, and then, of course, us. We talk about what they need to know. So it's not a infomercial about me, how cool I am, but just strictly giving the brides the tools that they need...

**RB:** *Heather, I assume you go along to the bridal fairs?*

**HD:** Yes.

**RB:** *Do you find that being able to sit down and talk with the brides woman to woman, that you are able to connect with them a little bit better than us guys?*

**HD:** Yes. I think some people relate better to a woman. I think some people relate better to a man. I think that's why Todd and I both being there it gives them the option of who they feel comfortable talking to...That's the main thing that I do with Todd. Instead of going out and DJing, I go to all the bridal fairs with him and I help market the business...The brides, I feel that a lot of them relate to me because I've been through it; we're married.

**TD:** ...Also, just a cool thing about the bridal shows, too, is we've been able to incorporate—my six-year-old actually works the runway. My 16-year-old works the runway as a groomsman.

**RB:** *Where do you think you guys will be personally and with your business in five, 10 years? What's your eventual goal for this?*

**TD:** For us, we've been looking into buying a wedding facility or running some kind of a sports bar. We're kind of looking at different avenues. That's my ultimate goal, we'd have our own wedding facility, to be able to offer brides the location, a DJ. We do décor. We do the actual lighting. We do the video. But also having some other professionals in the office to be available to work their services. So giving the bride more of a wedding mall or one-stop wedding shop.

**RB:** *Any parting words? What do you want people to remember about you?*

**TD:** Well, my thing is that I want to be remembered that I gave something back to an industry that was so good to me. I'd like to be known for the guy in my area who unified all the DJ companies so we can come together and work together...I know in some markets, DJs are all the best of friends. Unfortunately, here in this market, there are not a lot of friendships between different companies. I have a couple companies, guys I've known for years that we help each other out. In fact, one of them called me last weekend and needed some extra speakers, and we were happy to help him out. But unfortunately, the industry here is very competitive. Guys don't want to get along. So I'd like to be the guy who unified our Central Valley. **MB**



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# The After-Prom Phenomenon

Taking advantage of the latest "add-on"—a complete, additional party.

BY MARC ANDREWS

**A**ll across the country, there is a growing market trend for DJs: after-proms. What are after-proms? They are simply parent-organized events for kids following the prom. Parent committees work all school year to raise money and prizes for different activities and giveaways. Around this neck of the woods (the Midwest), many of these after-proms are held at the schools, and others are held at various places, such as malls and indoor gaming centers. Most of these events start within 30 minutes of the prom dance ending. These events provide a safe place for kids to go to after the prom where they can have fun, hang out with friends, and not worry about being pressured to drink alcohol. Most schools in our area allow after-proms to be held at the schools in order to avoid the costs of paying venues such as clubs or lounges.

## EXPANDING THE POST-PROM EXPERIENCE

For years, inflatable and home-made games have been the way that these committees have gone about providing fun for their students. Now, they are looking for new and more exciting things to draw their students in. This is where we come in.

In previous issues of Mobile Beat, we have written reviews of the Open Air Photo Booth, European Body Art's mobile airbrush tattoo station, and the various video game systems that are coming out to enhance the game play of Guitar Hero, Dance Dance Revolution (DDR), Rock Band. DigiGames and Creative Imagineering are well-known among mobile entertainers for providing

high-quality game show systems. Using various combinations of any of these, plus DJ equipment that you already own, you can expand into this market.

## SELLING TO THE COMMITTEES

When you approach the planning committee, you have to plan ahead as to how you will set your idea apart from what they can do. Most people own a Playstation or Xbox and can easily take their home system to an event like this and hook it up. However, there are things you can do to "dress the game" to make it a better game playing experience. Several companies now make real guitars that have been converted to game controllers. (See MB \_\_\_\_\_ for examples.) Use various DJ lighting fixtures to light the game play area and create a stage-like atmosphere.

For DDR, we take moving heads and set them up on each side of the screen and have them run automatically, while other lights shine down on the players who are playing. For Rock Band, we've found it's very effective to take a T-bar of lights and set them up as if there was a small band playing a concert. Take a couple of wash lights and place them in front of the "band" as if it was stage lighting. Do the same with Guitar Hero.

We also take them the idea of having one of our staff members DJ the after-prom. Not every kid is going to want to play games and do the inflatable. Some are there for the prizes. Play music for them to enjoy during the night. If the school is having a hypnotist or other type of on-site performer, approach them about providing sound for that person. There are many different ways to get into the after-prom—it just takes some thought and exploration on your part to identify the best approaches for your prospective clients.

When you go to the planning meeting to pitch your services, take the real guitar game controller with you for them to see and touch; bring handouts with more details for them to review. I even have a slideshow of past events that I will sometimes show while I am talking to a group.

## HELP WITH FUNDRAISING

Most of the groups that plan these events need some type of help with fundraising to pay for the events. This is another place your company can shine. Offer them different fund raising ideas. Our most popular idea to reel them in is an Adult Prom. Usually held in February or March, these dances are a fun way for parents to have a good

time. We even have parents break out old prom outfits.

Another popular idea is a 50/50 dance for kids. The way we do this is to split the door admission 50/50 up to a certain point for a basic dance package. Sometimes we get schools that only raise \$150 for their group, but other schools have raised \$500 or more.

## THE SEMI-MAIN EVENT

The most important thing about doing an after-prom, like any event, is the pre-planning. Depending on what you are doing at the event, you will want to go to the venue ahead of time and find out where you will be getting your power from. That is just common sense. However, don't forget to ask where the other things such as inflatable and extra lighting they are going to get their power as well. There are times we have to run 50-100 feet of extension cords to power different things. As an example of the potential for unique situations, two schools we work with have power outlets above the retractable bleachers, and we have to bring in extension ladders to reach the outlets.

When it comes to setting up, give yourself plenty of time. We will set up either the night before if the area will be locked up, or first thing the morning of the event. This will give you more time to be creative with your set up, as well as to scope out and fix any problems.

The final aspect of the after-prom that may concern you is manpower to run the different activities. If you do not have a large staff, there is an easy solution for this that is often overlooked: temporary staffing. Inflatable companies use them all the time. These are people you can hire for a night to oversee various parts of your event. Typically, the students themselves know how to run the video game systems and just need someone there to make sure your equipment is not being damaged. Have a couple of your staff members there to be general overseers, but use temp staff in areas where you do not need someone to stand tight watch over things. Most temporary staffing places will cover the person's insurance and take care of the tax issues.

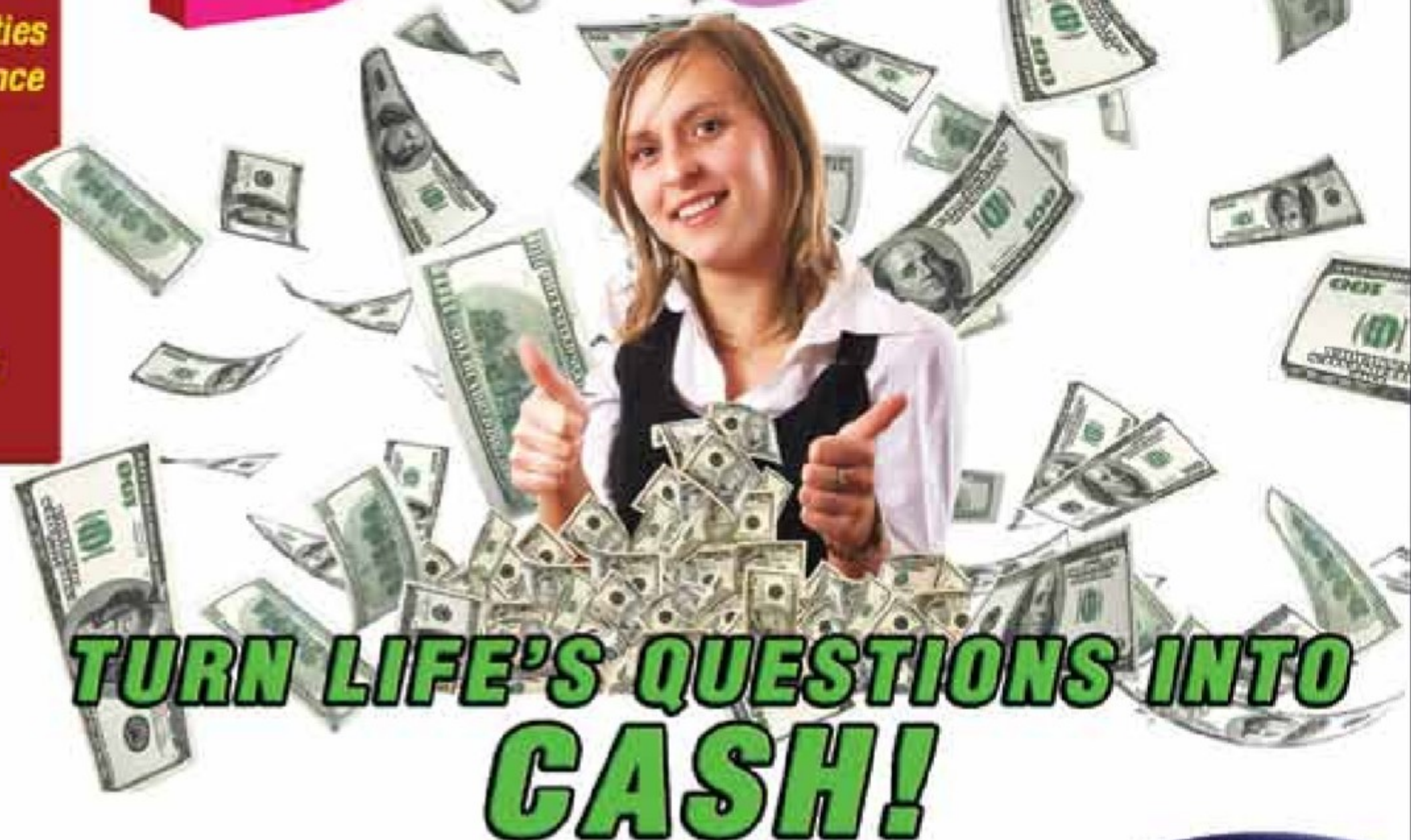
With after-proms in some cases overshadowing the prom itself in terms of the party vibe, you'd do well to investigate this phenomenon. If it has already taken hold in your area, it's certainly not too late to get a piece of the pie. If it is yet to surface in a major way, then here is your opportunity to cash in big on an exciting new trend! **MB**



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# Pump Up Your Performance

Don't settle for just OK—carefully cultivate your skills

BY PAUL KIDA, THE DJ COACH



It's the end of the evening and you mentally look back at how your event went. For the most part you are satisfied that you did your job well. People have come up to you and expressed how they enjoyed the uniqueness of your presentation and how well you incorporated the personalities of the bride and groom. Still, there is that nagging feeling that you could have done a little bit better on some aspects of the night's festivities. "Oh well," you think, "I'll do better next time." You send out a performance evaluation form to the bride and groom and it comes back with Outstanding and Excellent marked, with just a few Goods checked. It looks like you did another bang up job. Maybe those few doubts you had weren't really important anyway...or were they after all?

Sound familiar? Have you ever found yourself in this position and simply brushed off the doubts as you continued on your way to the next gig, doing business as usual? Is this the work of a true professional—one who is concerned with doing the absolute best for his or her clients? Of course not! Yet, many of us have handled the situation this way.

What separates the truly professional mobile entertainer from the ones who are less than concerned about personal and business improvement is the recognition that growth should be a continual process (no matter how long we have been in the business). What can we do individually to show our professional attitude that is so necessary for our business reputation? Let's look at a few areas where we can change our outlook and pep up our performance.

## MORE THAN AN OUNCE OF PREPARATION

The first area we should examine is our preparation. Good preparation is the core of any outstanding performance. We often have the attitude that "I've done this hundreds of times. I could probably do this in my sleep!" WRONG! Remember this important fact that is easy to forget when we have been in the business for a long time: Each and every event, though it may be similar, is different and unique to the personalities of our clients. This could be the only time in their lives that they will hire a DJ (of course, we need to try to change that!). The point is that we need to show the proper respect for our clients,

as well as ourselves, by preparing thoroughly for each event as if it were the first time we were doing this.

Proper preparation includes checking IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT that we have the necessary music, the proper pronouncement of names to be announced, the names of family members, who the other vendors are that will be working the event, and the way the client wants any special events or traditions to go. Knowing the names of family members and special friends to whom they may want to give special recognition is imperative. Don't think that you can just show up the day of the event and find these things out, and also present a polished, professional event. Working this way is not doing the best we can for the client. Remember, you can never know too much about your clients, their families and friends. (Even knowing things that should not be said is a great help!) Remember, knowledge is power, and in this case, it is power to create an unforgettable reception by incorporating each individual client's own vision, personality and style.

## BEING THE HOST WITH THE MOST

Another important aspect is our actual presence and our MC/Hosting abilities. There is an old saying in the business and it is very true: We definitely should NOT make ourselves the life of the party. However, it is our job to bring life TO the party. Our presence should exhibit professionalism, authority and responsibility the minute we arrive at the facility. Have your clients hired you





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because they trust you, with your knowledge and ability, to properly direct a reception or party? Then it is your obligation to stand out as the director, MC and/or host for the evening. Show everyone the difference between a truly professional entertainer and someone who just plays music. Show them how it can make (or break) the event. You will see a difference. At nearly every event, I have at least one person come up and say that they had been at a recent event that was very disorganized, with no direction from the DJ. Believe me when I say it makes a big impression on people when things run smoothly.

Are you not sure how to go about hosting or being the MC for a big event? Two great resources I can think of to give you that extra boost of confidence are Jim Cerone's Perfect Host DVD series and Mark Ferrell's MC Workshop. Those that



have taken advantage of these teaching tools will tell you that what is learned has been a tremendous help for their DJ businesses.

#### REHEARSAL SPACE

Is rehearsal a part of your regular routine in preparing for an event? You might think that rehearsal is simply something that would be included in preparation, but let's differentiate a little. Preparation is getting facts and details of the event from the client and planning out the timeline for special events of the evening, as we have discussed. Rehearsal is taking it one step further by actually going through your event out loud. It is something that most of us probably do not do to the extent we should, but it can be invaluable in bringing extraordinary results. By saying names out loud, honing our vocal techniques in front of a mirror, recording ourselves (NOBODY wants to hear the dreaded DJ Voice!), and practicing using both physical and facial gestures, you can become a much more polished and natural DJ/MC. Through repeated rehearsals, your mind becomes more attuned to your upcoming event; it actually becomes part of you and just comes out automatically the day of the event.

Rehearsal can also give you extra self-confidence. You'll walk in assured that you will remember the names correctly, that you will be a great MC and that the day will come off without a hitch!

#### ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING

A point, which too many times goes unnoticed, is that of emotion. Every event we do is filled with some kind of emotion, whether it is excitement, fun, love, humor, and sometimes even sadness in remembering ones that could not be there. We should use emotion to our advantage. For instance, at a wedding there is a huge opportunity to use emotions throughout the event. As an example, during the Grand Entrance, can you do something that will get the crowd emotionally involved before the bride and groom walk through the door? If you have done your homework, there is probably a little tidbit of information that you can share with the guests to really get them pumped up and involved. Take it a step beyond the usual "Let's make some noise for the bride and groom" routine. Has the couple shared a touching or humorous moment together that you know about from your consultations with them? Look for ways to incorporate this and share it with the guests before they arrive. You can also create emotional moments throughout the evening without overdoing it. (You don't want to be telling a story every time they get up to do something, and of course, caution is called for. You would never want to say anything that they may have told you that would be improper or embarrassing for them or their families.) The point is, if you can reach the hearts of those in attendance by making it very personal and touching, you will be guaranteed to have the most memorable events—which will set you apart from your competition.

The last thing that I will say is simply, "Be inspirational!" Inspire yourself and you will inspire your clients as well.

#### STRENGTH TRAINING

Remember; don't think outside the box...because there is no box! Don't let go of your creativity. This doesn't mean that you have to change everything you do, just take it one step at a time. Try changing or adding just one thing to your next gig, then look for ways to change one more thing at the next one. Always look for areas where you can improve. Ask yourself if you are properly preparing for your events. If not, work on those points where you may need improvement. Are your hosting and MC abilities great? If you are not sure, then ask a trusted fellow DJ to give you some constructive criticism, then turn around and do the same for them. Are you not rehearsing before your gigs? Try it and you definitely will see a marked improvement in your performance.

To sum up this approach to improvement, don't be satisfied with what you are doing now. No matter who you are or how long you have been in the business, you can always grow as a performer and learn new things. Do a personal check on yourself and, where you have to, pump up your performance! **MB**

Please send any comments on this article, suggestions for future articles or questions to [djcoach@mobilebeat.com](mailto:djcoach@mobilebeat.com).

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**YOU SHOULD EXAMINE YOURSELF DAILY. IF YOU FIND FAULTS, YOU SHOULD CORRECT THEM. WHEN YOU FIND NONE, YOU SHOULD TRY EVEN HARDER.**

**ISRAEL ZANGWILL**

Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment ([www.jammcatsdj.com](http://www.jammcatsdj.com)), and is a regular speaker at the Mobile Beat DJ Shows.





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# The Host with the Most

Be the best MC you can be—and get paid for it!

BY TOM HAIBECK

**A**re you charging extra for your services as a wedding MC? If not, you should be. After all, time is money. If you spend additional time helping the couple plan their reception—and then provide extra service to that couple as a professional MC—you are entirely justified in charging a fee over and above your normal rate for DJ services.

Think of it this way. If you hire a contractor to renovate your kitchen (at a set price) and then ask him to also renovate your bathroom, do you think he's going to take on that extra work for

free? If you retain a lawyer to draft your will (for a set fee) and then ask for your wife's will to be drawn up as well, do you think the snake, I mean lawyer, will throw that in for free? Hair stylists charge extra for colour treatments (not that I'd know anything about that). Ski instructors charge more for private lessons. Even my shoeshine guy dings me an extra buck if I'm wearing boots (which require more time to polish).

Yet sadly, far too many mobile entertainers are willing to throw in their services as MC for no extra charge. And worse, they often agree to those terms on the day of the wedding (when the bride and groom are in panic mode and suddenly realize they haven't made any arrangements for an MC). That puts the DJ in an incredibly awkward position, and leaves little or no time for them to properly prepare for their role as MC. The result can be disastrous for all concerned.

And that's precisely why you need to address the situation with your client at the time of the booking. The fact is, most couples simply don't have any background in event planning. (Why would they?)

They don't "get" the fact that feeding and entertaining several hundred guests requires both a carefully planned agenda and a strong presence to lead guests through it (in the form of an MC). As a result, they spend countless hours writing vows and trying on dresses and finding flowers and buying diamonds and trust that everything will just magically flow together on their wedding day.

## PICTURE THIS...

As we all know too well, that seldom happens. That's why you, as the wedding professional, need to be proactive in educating your clients about both the need for proper planning and the importance of a properly-prepared MC.

It's simple communication—if your ski instructor, for example, explains that the one-on-one attention you're going to get through a private lesson will accelerate the learning curve and have you off the bunny slope on

day one, you're going to readily grasp the advantage and be willing to pay the extra fee for his or her personalized expertise.

Paint a similar picture for your prospective clients. Tell them that you offer two different "packages" of services as a wedding entertainer. Package one—the after-dinner music and entertainment program—provides the basics (music/dancing/entertainment). Quote your price for that and ask them if they have thought about who will MC the wedding reception.

They may have no idea as to what a wedding MC does—so here's your chance to educate them on the need and up-sell them on your services.

Explain to them that a wedding reception falls into the category of "special event"—the bringing together of a large group of people. And just as a meeting needs a Chairman, a special event needs a Master of Ceremonies to lead people through it.

Emphasize how your experience and professionalism will prove invaluable throughout both the planning process and the performance to follow. Explain why it's so important to have an experienced professional at the podium to help ensure the evening unfolds as planned (so everyone can have a great time). And be sure to outline the kind of research, attention to detail and overall prep time needed for you to do an outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies.

Once clients grasp the fact that an MC's role involves far more than just "making a few announcements" and that the time you invest will have an enormous impact on the overall success of the event, they'll be more than willing to pay you a premium for your professional services. Because while they might not fully appreciate the intricacies involved, they most certainly understand the need for their wedding reception to be fun, exciting and classy.

After all, it's not only "The Biggest Day of Their Lives"—it also needs to be "The Greatest Night EVER." Deliver on that dream and it's money in the bank. **MB**

*Tom Haibek is the author of **The Wedding MC: A Complete Guide to Success for the Master of Ceremonies and Wedding Toasts Made Easy** (available online, in major bookstores and through the author's website at [WeddingToasts.com](http://WeddingToasts.com)). Tom recently shared his MCing expertise at a number of MB Tour stops.*





# How to MC a Wedding: Top Ten Tips

- 1** Meet with the couple well in advance of the wedding to plan an agenda for the wedding reception. Commit that to paper and make sure they sign off on it. Then give a copy of the agenda to all key players (caterer, photographer, videographer, people making toasts).
- 2** Know your audience. Get a read on who is going to be in attendance (ask the couple for feedback) and tailor your presentation accordingly.
- 3** Don't try to be funny if you're not. Your main role is to lead people through the event—and you don't have to keep the audience in stitches in order to achieve that.
- 4** Classy and low key always work. Save the jokes and magic and pyrotechnics for the after-dinner dancing and entertainment segment (and let guests enjoy dinner and chat amongst themselves).
- 5** Interview members of the wedding party so you can use their "back stories" to introduce them. Wedding guests are always curious about who is in the wedding party, their relationship to the couple, where they live, what they do and who they are (as people). Use that information to make an informed introduction (and to perhaps kid each person a little bit as well).
- 6** Schedule the wedding toasts for the dessert/coffee time. That way, guests can enjoy some special time together, and the people making toasts can have their full attention during the formal "after-dinner" wedding toasts and speeches.
- 7** Suggest to the couple that all "toastors" be identified in advance of the reception and identified on the agenda. "Open mics" are too often an open invitation to disaster.
- 8** Try to work with those toastors in advance of going "live." Make yourself available prior to the start of the reception to give those individuals a chance to rehearse their speech and familiarize themselves with the setting. Be sure to show them how to use the microphone. (You might also suggest ahead of time that they buy a copy of *Wedding Toasts Made Easy* at [WeddingToasts.com](http://WeddingToasts.com)).
- 9** Limit the toasting and speeches segment to a maximum of twenty minutes. Politely advise each speaker that they should limit their speech to a maximum of three to five minutes, and that you may have to give them the hook if they drone on (simply bring up some music and canned applause).
- 10** If you're nervous about public speaking, enroll in a Dale Carnegie Course or join a Toastmasters chapter. You're being called upon to "preside" over the reception (as Master of Ceremonies). The more confident you are as a speaker, the more effective you will be in taking charge of that event and making sure it stays on track.

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# Reinventing Interaction

A wake-up call for entertainers: How will you change your interactive strategies to serve the new technology-driven, social media-saturated culture?

BY MIKE FICHER



**S**cott Faver has seen the future—and that vision portends a seismic shift in the way mobile entertainers interact with their guests.

"I recently did a youth event in California where I played some games, performed as the MC," Faver recounts, "but when it came time for dancing, everyone simply plugged into their iPod and rocked out. The party was for a small group, about 35 kids, in the recreation room of a retirement community and noise was an issue. This was their solution."

Is that the future of socializing—we are gathered together in one place but in our own self-created, self-gratifying, but somewhat isolated cocoons?

While many in the mobile entertainment field fear the iPod wedding—where potential clients

simply plug in a portable music unit with a couple of powered speakers and thousands of songs to provide the audio accompaniment for their event, forsaking a disc jockey or band—what Faver experienced highlights an entirely new paradigm on the impact of progressively more personal, infinitely more powerful audio, processing and communication technology on social interactions. And, the ultimate fallout from the disconnect between the light-speed convergence of new technology and the sluggish ethical and social assimilation is far from known. It's somewhat akin to trying to keep up with Usain Bolt in the 100 meters.

Are the days of the peripatetic, interactive entertainer dwindling? What's to become of the omnipresent performer who smartly combines games, trivia, keen timing with music, soundbytes, and announcements to weave an engaging, vivid audio and visual tapestry?



### MAX YASGUR'S FARM

Forty years ago, Woodstock crowned the majesty of the then-younger generation's vision of peace, love and community. An estimated 400,000 to 500,000 music and art enthusiasts gathered on Max Yasgur's dairy farm in the charming hamlet of Bethel, New York for what the son of Russian immigrants reflected on as "three days of fun and music...and nothing but fun and music." Albeit mixed with a little protest, a lot of drugs and few facilities.

At Woodstock, individuals came together primarily to enjoy music (32 acts performed during the four days), "make the scene" and, in small part, to protest against the Vietnam War, "the man," or "the system." The main cause, specifically, the music, drew the attendees together. And, as we learn in life, some events, for sometimes elusive reasons, take on lives of their own. Such was Woodstock.

Ironically, near the same time, the mobile disc jockey was emerging from the shadows of the bedrooms and basements of America. Adventurous souls were starting to cart their vinyl or cassettes and enough home or professional audio equipment to events to provide music. Yes, the equipment was primitive by today's standards and "interactive" skills were almost non-existent, but the industry enjoyed its infancy amidst the peace, love and protests of the late 1960s.

### PODSTOCK?

Now, with technology so radically reshaping the entertainment environment, could such a seminal event as Woodstock happen today? Possibly, but two factors might radically alter the substance of the event. One, the gathering would probably take place online. And, two, the overriding sense is that individuals will render individual decisions absent an overarching cause and those collective decisions would build into a movement. Subtly varied from the cause driving the movement. And, based on Faver's observation, they all might bring their iPods to enjoy "their" music. But, they could still be together.

Now, how does that trend, perhaps, an extension of Faith Popcorn's cocooning forecast in the early 1990s, if accepted, impact the mobile entertainer, particularly the interactive specialist?

### BEING UNIQUE

Certainly, seasoned and active entertainers such as Faver, who serves Southern California, southern Nevada and Arizona, bear witness to the feedback of clients to the popular interactive craze of the past dozen years or so.

"Clients want fewer of the traditional, canned, 'been there, done that' games that they have seen DJs perform a hundred times with or without their own little twists," reports the renowned Game Master. "Clients are more interested in what you can do to personalize the traditional moments. They are looking to eliminate the traditional and add something new or unique to their event that puts their own personal style into the celebration."

In other words, keep the focus on the client and not on the entertainer. It's all about them.

### ADD A FEW MORE MINUTES, ANDY

"The audience can now experience an event without even being there, via webcasting. They can even participate in the fun, again without being there, by remote video," notes Faver. "Most new laptops have a webcam, and there are a variety of video email services that include live webcasting options to make this possible."

A recent popular advertisement vividly highlights the remote technology trend, but via a role reversal. A Verizon Wireless spot features a married couple on a patio texting each other while sitting only a few feet away. Their son and daughter enter and ask to talk with them. Without skipping a beat on their keyboards, the two adults tell their kids to text them if they want to converse.

"This is getting close to the truth. It's already a reality for kids," says Faver. "And adults are getting into it, too. The idea of 'interaction' these days includes some kind of digital device."

### YOUR WORLD, EVERYWHERE

Certainly, technology everywhere from base model cell phones to BlackBerries to notebook PCs can allow individuals to constantly stay connected in the virtual world, while also being engaged in the physical world. But, while sexy



does that mean for the mobile entertainer, trying to engage and mobilize an audience, particularly a younger one, with all those potentially distracting digital devices active?

### HEY, LOOK AT ME!

It might be too early to draw any formative conclusions, but, anecdotally—specifically for the highly interactive entertainer—the signs of impact are becoming visible at multiple levels and at an accelerated rate.

Faver says, "Over the last few years, the majority of my wedding clients are requesting much less in the way of interactive dances than they have in the past. They are now looking for 'classy entertainment.' After talking with them further, what most mean is great music, light interaction (group dances are out) and someone who knows

**"THE IDEA OF 'INTERACTION' THESE DAYS INCLUDES SOME KIND OF DIGITAL DEVICE."**  
**SCOTT FAVER**

and trendy, is that constant connection always productive?

A recent, highly publicized study (published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences) from researchers at Stanford University concluded that multitaskers are more easily distracted and less able to ignore irrelevant information than people who do less multitasking.

"We kept looking for what [multitaskers] are better at, and we didn't find it," Eyal Ophir, the study's lead author, told Stanford News.

"The huge finding is, the more media people use, the worse they are at using any media. We were totally shocked," noted Clifford Nass, a professor at Stanford's communications department, in a telephone interview with CNN.

In a society that seems to encourage more and more multitasking, the findings have social implications, Nass observed.

"They couldn't ignore stuff that doesn't matter. They love stuff that doesn't matter."

Perhaps the multitaskers can take in the information and organize it better? Unfortunately, no.

"They are worse at that, too," Nass said.

If that is, indeed, accurate over a wider population—a scary prospect for our citizenry—what

microphone etiquette."

That view is reflected in expectations for the next few years:

"I personally think that the next year or two, we will see a dramatic drop-off in the level of interaction," says Keith Alan, a highly respected entertainer serving the Northeast. "That's because the number of people getting into this business is growing at such an alarming rate due to the advancement in computer technology."

Thus, technology, principally compact, personal equipment, allowing guests to interact on a new, unprecedented level and also supporting easy entry into the industry for aspiring entertainers, is yielding potentially significant changes in the way entertainers transact their business. In much the same way the advent of interactivity and broadening of entertainment skills has pushed the mobile industry forward over the last 15 years, clients' expectations for 21st-century ways of interacting to be incorporated into the mobile entertainment milieu are rising.

### THE HARD WAY

Echoing Peter Merry's recent well-reasoned and spot-on assertion that outstanding entertainers, like great athletes and exceptional professionals,





INTERACT WITH GUESTS, BUT ALWAYS ENSURE THAT THE CLIENT AND THE GUESTS "STAR" ON THE STAGE AND SCREEN OF THE EVENT

make difficult tasks appear effortless and seamless (and encourage mimicry), Alan suspects the entry barrier issue will implode.

"Most new to the field will soon realize that there is much more to hosting a wedding than just knowing a program. That being said, over the long term, more clients will be looking for someone who can bring back the excitement and fun of a reception, rather than someone who will just play music."

#### "GOOGLE" FOR \$200, ALEX

Even in the realm of games, a growing and popular entertainment avenue in our trivia-saturated culture, technology—specifically wireless devices—has impacted the way entertainers now handle that activity.

Alan cites one example: "I used to do a table trivia game where I would give each table a list of 25 trivia questions. They have to work together as a team (table) to answer them. However, now that everyone has instant access to the internet, some are left at a disadvantage."

Not surprisingly, technology also provided a solution. "Now, each table gets a lock-out controller and I simply ask one question every 5 minutes. First table that rings in get the chance to answer it for points," said Alan. "That gets me running around the room getting answers and boosting the energy level of the entire party. Works GREAT!"

#### SKIP THE MIDDLEMAN

Interactive texting systems, such as Textlive, now allow guests to bypass the entertainer and post text messages, dedications and shouts directly to a video screen at the event. More affordable video projection systems now allow broadcast of the event at the event.

With the growing marriage of audio and video at events and America's increasing narcissism, fueled by technology, including Facebook (Tom Peters years ago forecasted that we would soon evolve from people to brands), MySpace, Twitter (Do I really care what you had for breakfast?), cameras on computers, cameras embedded in phones...the question then becomes: are we entertaining at an event or are we now participating in a whole new endeavor? Faver thinks the stage has changed.

"I believe that more and more clients are looking for a TV show or a movie for their celebrations," he observes. "The client and the guests are now the stars of that movie. And the DJ/entertainer is the creative director behind the scenes creating the magic."

Where aspiring entertainers once emulated the standout performers on stage and on the screen, is the future now "behind the camera," so to speak? Are we becoming the Wizard in our client's land of Oz? Should mobile entertainers now think of themselves as Scorceses instead of Streeps?

This all may point to a clearer primary interactive strategy for entertainers, in the next few years—interact with guests, but always ensure that the client and the guests "star" on the stage and screen of the event, even in their own self-created world. Funny...haven't mobile entertainers been doing that all along? Well, now we have to figure new technology and its associated new social constructs into the interactive entertainment equation. **MB**

*Mobile DJ, dance instructor, MC, voice actor, writer, teacher, and improv comedian, Mike Ficher owns and operates Dance Express mobile entertainment, based in Bend, Oregon. A regular presenter and host at Mobile Beat conventions, Mike has been expanding the public's definition of the mobile entertainer since 1986.*



## TESTING THE MULTI-TASKERS

### IN THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY STUDY ON MULTITASKERS, HOW DID RESEARCHERS TEST THE SUBJECTS?

After determining the number of media items subjects used at various frequencies—results ranged from an average of about 1.5 media items at the low end to more than four among heavy users—researchers then tested the abilities of students in the various groups.

To test the ability to ignore irrelevant information, subjects were shown a group of red and blue rectangles. The shapes were then blanked out, and then the subjects were shown rectangles again and asked if any of the red ones had moved. The test required ignoring the blue rectangles. The researchers surmised that people who do a lot of multitasking would score stronger.

"But they're not. They're worse. They're much worse," says Stanford communications professor Clifford Nass. The high media multitaskers couldn't ignore the blue rectangles.

"So then we thought, OK, maybe they have bigger memories. They don't. They were equal" (with the low multitaskers), he added.

Finally, researchers tested each subject's ability to switch from one task to another by classifying a letter as a vowel or consonant, or a number as even or odd. The high multitaskers took longer to make the switch from one task to the other. Again, this observation surprised the researchers, considering the need to switch from one thing to another in multitasking.



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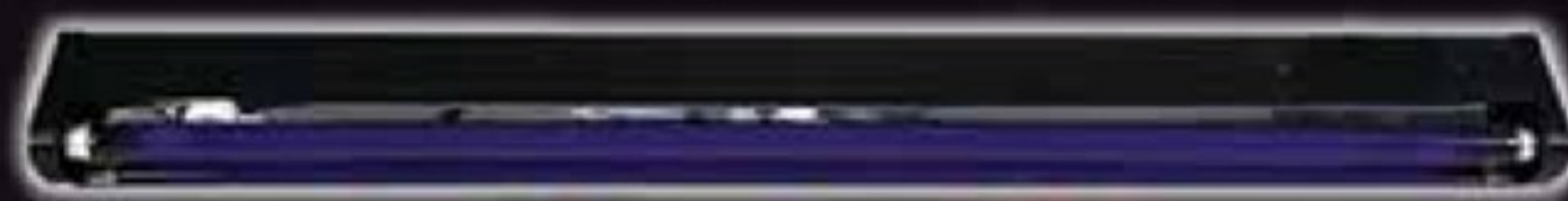


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# Speak Up: Someone's Listening

Toastmasters provides a powerful opportunity for public speaking improvement

BY MIKE "DR. FRANKENSTAND" RYAN

**H**ave you ever been talking to someone or left a phone message and afterwards cringed, wishing you said something different. If the answer is "Yes" (and who can really say "No"?), then this article is for you.

Most of my incidents from childhood that have contributed to how we've ended up dealing with public speaking as adults. When I was a kid, although I didn't like math, there was one male math teacher who I thought was pretty cool. I went up to him one day to say hi and...he had the stinkiest breath I'd ever smelled—shockingly rotten! Smelling his breath was like grinding your face into a cigarette ash tray! After that I was so fearful that my mouth would smell that bad that I started speaking under my breath; consequently, my speech suffered. This habit continued into adulthood.

As a result, speaking in public was not one of my strong points. It's interesting that I should pick DJing as a career. Needless to say, I had to work hard at announcing and I still do. When I landed my first real commercial radio job I actually beat out another jock who had a great voice, because, more than anything, I was enthusiastic. He was just looking for a job.

I became a decent enough announcer on-air, but even today I still have challenges speaking on the mike. My mental hard drive spins faster than my mouth can keep up with it. But I've discovered a great resource for help: Toastmasters International.

## SOMETHING TO SPEAK OF

Earlier this year the President of our local DJ association, Ron Jones, had the foresight to invite a Toastmaster to our monthly meeting as the



guest speaker. Jones, a very smooth and elegant speaker himself, makes a good argument for the value of Toastmasters: "With the increase in competition in a field flooded with second-tier talent, it is absolutely essential that the better MCs/DJs look for ways to stand out from the pack. How you get to the close often depends on your poise, confidence, and ability to relate to a discerning party planner. Toastmasters, a non-profit group, focuses on learning and sharpening the skills needed for public speaking in a fun and supportive environment."

I didn't give Toastmasters much thought until a few months ago when I suggested to an associate that she might benefit from Toastmasters. She was a great speaker already and I thought she would make a great public speaker. She decided to join a local chapter and I was so surprised that she took my advice that I decided I'd give it a try too.

Toastmasters wasn't what I thought it would be—no funny furry hats or secret hand-shakes—just people who have various speaking skills (or lack thereof) all learning from each other. Now I'm furiously working my way through the Toastmasters book. *Competent Communication*.

## VERBAL REALITY CHECK

During the weekly Toastmaster meetings everyone gets a chance to speak, either by telling the joke of the day, giving a prepared five to six-minute speech, and/or participating in more challenging "Table Topics," which teach you to give impromptu one or two-minute speeches in a clear, organized manner with no preparation. This is the hardest thing for me. I now have a better appreciation for politicians who are gifted at answering reporters' questions (with so-called soundbites).

The real benefit of Toastmasters comes from the critiques that you receive. If you've never had anyone count how many times you said "crutch words" like: "um," "but," "ah," "you know," etc., I can tell you, it's a humbling experience. I didn't have any idea that I tend to say "ah" quite a lot when I speak. Good to know! Toastmasters gives you the unique opportunity to hear yourself as others actually hear you. Quite enlightening.

A perfect example of someone who could really benefit from Toastmasters is a close DJ friend of mine who puts on spectacular shows with lights and video. He gave me permission to share a little about his shyness, in order to help others with similar challenges. Eduardo "Eddie" Valenzuela, owner of Boogie Nights in Chula Vista California, used to be so shy that when it came time for him to make an announcement he would duck down behind his equipment. For a DJ, that's potentially problematic, to say the least. His answer to this obvious problem was to hire an announcer MC to join him at every show. A very intelligent guy, Eddie, like me, has the same problem of his mind working faster than his mouth can keep up. Toastmasters is a better and cheaper solution to both our dilemmas. Most importantly, it's a safe place where there isn't any penalty for failure.

Like most of the educational articles in *Mobile Beat*, they only help if we follow through and learn from them. If you have any public speaking challenges that are holding you back from being the best MC you can be, this great organization is waiting to help you. As the Toastmasters International slogan says: "Because Communication Isn't Optional." **MB**

**TOASTMASTERS GIVES YOU THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR YOURSELF AS OTHERS ACTUALLY HEAR YOU.**

Mike Ryan started out writing for news radio, and has DJ'd on KGB and KSDS in San Diego. His mobile DJ moniker is *Mike on the Mike*, and he also works part time as a DMC tour guide. Mike is also the inventor *Frankenstand Powered Speaker Stands* and is working to grow this business into a true monster. He has been the President of the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association, a board member of his local NACE chapter and is a member of the San Diego Chapter of the ADJA.





## Don't Burn Your Toast!

### TIPS FOR WEDDING RECEPTION TOASTERS, FROM TOASTMASTERS.ORG...

Timing may be everything, but wording isn't far behind. Consider one of the most famous toasts of all: "Here's looking at you, kid"—Humphrey Bogart's words to Ingrid Bergman in the legendary 1942 film, *Casablanca*. Now trade "kid" for another endearment. No big deal? Maybe. But Bogie probably would have achieved another kind of immortality if he'd raised his glass to Bergman and said, "Here's looking at you ... babycakes!" Likewise, if you're the Best Man, Maid of Honor or other wedding VIP, you should be aware of the trust that has been placed in you to say exactly the right thing.

A wedding toast should be "brief, personal and customized to the occasion," says Toastmasters International

President Jana Barnhill. "Most of all, it should be heartfelt."

Speaking from the heart is the key to an appropriate toast. To help you put your best foot forward—and not in your mouth—Toastmasters offers the following tips:

- Pick a topic that is personal but appropriate.
- Keep it short—no more than few minutes. "Essentially, the best advice in public speaking is to always be brief," says President Barnhill.
- Practice. Think about what you want to say, and practice the toast in advance. Use friends as sounding boards beforehand.
- Stay sober. Being coherent helps.
- Be careful with humor—that personal story you consider harmless may not be seen the same way by others.

- Dress your best. If you look good, you'll feel more confident.

In the film *Wedding Crashers*, Owen Wilson offers good advice that echoes President Barnhill: "I think you're better off going with something from the heart. Honestly." Remember, your friend or family member has chosen you to fulfill a special role on that special day. This is your chance to speak with love and make their day complete.

With over 12,000 clubs, Toastmasters International is a non-profit organization serving more than 250,000 members in 106 countries. For more information about Toastmasters International, please visit [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org). Since its founding in 1924, Toastmasters International has helped more than four million men and women develop their public speaking skills and become confident communicators at work, at home, and yes, even at parties.

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SOUL  
SAY YEAHHH!  
Spinning Your Favorite



# Mitzvah Motivators—The Life of the Party!

To be the hero of the day, you may need a trusty sidekick (or two, or...)

BY DJ DAYNA

**Y**ou have your dynamic duo of a DJ and MC, a rockin' sound system, dance floor lighting, tubes of glow necklaces and lots of fun giveaways. You are set to rock and roll for a bar mitzvah! Well, at least you think you are...but what about adding party "motivators" to mix? Interactive dancers or party motivators, as they are often called, are used primarily to engage guests in socializing and dancing at a party. Hiring party motivators for bar/bat mitzvahs has become a popular phenomenon across the country. Many mobile DJ companies have incorporated party motivators as part of their team and promote them on their websites, including them as part of their party packages they sell to clients.

## PROPER PARTY PERSPECTIVE

I've been a party motivator at hundreds of parties and have to say I wouldn't know how the DJ and MC would have handled some of those parties without me or the other dancers. It's a lot of fun, but not a piece of cake all the time. It can be brutal being around a group of unruly, hormone-raging teenagers and tipsy adults. I have learned a few lessons over the years on how to be a successful party motivator at a bar/bat mitzvah, and would like to share some information, which I hope is useful or amusing.

Sometimes people are under the wrong

impression of what a party motivator actually does at a party. They are not there to be the "eye candy" for the evening; they are in fact great assets in helping a bar/bat mitzvah be a successful event. However, it's important to know what to look for when hiring one and to be familiar with exactly what their role is at a bar/bat mitzvah. The last thing a mobile DJ business owner would want to happen is one of the dancers becoming the center of attention on the dance floor, or wake up the next day to an unhappy voicemail message from the client the next day asking where the dancers were at the party, or why her son has the phone number of the female dancer from the event last night!

## MOTIVATIONAL ROLE

Party motivators are the life of the party! They are the ones on the dance floor the entire night, keeping the party flowing. They should stand out and not blend with the guests, but also shouldn't steal the spotlight from the guest of honor. It's important that they socialize with the kids and the adults at the beginning of the party (during cocktail hour, as one possibility) so their existence is established, and as the evening progresses all the guests know who they are and will be more inclined to participate.

The main role of the party motivator is to build the energy up and maintain it on the dance floor throughout the night. There are several ways to do this. First, they can encourage guests who are seated to join them on the dance floor. Sometimes a little pull does the trick. Second, do follow-along dances with groups who are dancing or lead the entire group in a line dance. Third, they should remain energetic and stay out on the dance floor for the majority of the evening. In addition, party motivators can assist the MC with handing out the giveaways at the appropriate times, help lead the games, and anything else he or she needs extra help with.

When the MC is discussing details with the clients about their upcoming event, they should always ask them what their expectations are from the party motivators. Some may be particular as to what they want them to do and not to do.





### NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES

Along with the fun parts of being a party motivator, there are some challenges. Sometimes the only challenge is getting people out on the dance floor or keeping them on the dance floor. That happens with both kids and adults. Dealing with a group of rowdy teenagers is another problem that can be difficult at times. They aren't all like this; I'm sure a lot of you have had good groups of kids at your bar/bat mitzvahs. But, a party motivator has to be prepared for the good and the bad. They have to be able to relate to the teenagers like a friend, but maintain a presence as an authority figure, so they are respected and don't get walked over. The female dancers should be aware of the flirtatious teenage boy who may be dared to "bump and grind" with her. Make sure the female dancers are always looking around while they are out on the dance floor! And if one of your dancers notices that happening, advise them to simply dance away into another direction.

### DRESS TO IMPRESS—NOT DISTRESS

The way a party motivator is dressed is extremely important because it makes an impression on the clients and their guests, as well as be a representation of your company. Booty shorts with a tank top or torn up jeans and a wife beater aren't going to cut it. The attire should be fashionable and comfortable. Bottom line is, party motivators represent the company just as much as the DJ and MC do. A typical outfit would be all black: black pants, black shirt, and comfortable black shoes. But, that doesn't mean they all have to match exactly. Owners should try to create a unique style for their companies. Ultimately, it's up to the owner on how he or she wants their party motivators to dress.

Here are some suggestions and guidelines for selecting the outfits for your dancers:

1. **Pants** • The black pants should be form fitting, but not too revealing for females. And for the male dancers, any nice pair of slacks that are easy to dance in should work. Whatever the style, they should have a crisp, clean look. Faded black pants look ridiculous!
2. **Tops** • You can have your dancers wear their own shirts, depending on what color and style is decided upon. Or you can get matching shirts for the females and matching shirts for the males. Some companies choose to buy shirts that match the company colors. Another idea is to have them coordinate with the theme of the bar/bat mitzvah. That always makes it fun! For example, if it's a sports theme, they could all wear a referee shirt and a baseball hat.
3. **Shoes** • They aren't go-go dancers, so no need to have the females wear black, patent leather knee high boots with a

**THE MAIN ROLE OF THE PARTY MOTIVATOR IS TO BUILD THE ENERGY UP AND MAINTAIN IT ON THE DANCE FLOOR THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.**

three-inch platform! They are on their feet for the majority of the night, so comfort is key. Any black shoe that combines comfort with an appropriately classy look is recommended.

4. **Hair & Makeup** • It doesn't matter how dancers wear their hair—up or down—as long as, it's washed and fixed nicely. Makeup should be kept fresh looking and not overdone. The guys definitely should be clean-shaven or nicely trimmed.

### IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT PARTY MOTIVATOR

Of course, a successful party motivator needs much more than just a sense of rhythm. He or she must be attractive, outgoing, friendly, confident, and not narcissistic. You don't want a show-off who steals the center of attention (unless it's an appropriate time during the night to show off a few moves). Party motivators also must look young and hip enough to impress a 13-year-old, yet mature enough to dance with the adults, while keeping all interactions acceptable. So where do you find the perfect party motivators?

Local dance studios and college campuses are a couple great places to advertise. Also, many companies post advertisements online, for example, on Craigslist. In my opinion, most high schoolers are too young and immature to be party motivators. They are simply too close in age to the teenagers at the bar/bat mitzvah. It's a good idea to interview all the potential motivators. Then bring them with you on a party so they can watch the other dancers in action and have them do a trial run to see if they fit in well with your company.

Party motivators not only keep the pulse of a party going all night long, but they are also there to make the MC's job easier. With the right qualities, training, and appearance, party motivators can be key to making a bar/bat mitzvah a big success. **MB**

*For DJ DAYna, aka Dayna Solomon, what started off as a college cash fund soon became a passion. She fell in love with the energy she found behind the turntables and in front of a crowd, and has been spinning as a mobile and club DJ ever since. She moved from Ohio to Los Angeles in 2006, where she freelances as a DJ/MC for special events.*





# In the Right Mood

What kind of atmosphere does your pre-reception play list actually create?

BY JAY MAXWELL

**I**t has always amazed me when someone has the gift of remembering song lyrics and can sing a song “on demand” without looking at any music sheets or lyrics. Several television game shows have even been created that challenge contestants’ knowledge of song lyrics. Often during a consultation with a bride and groom, they will see a song title and then ask me to sing a bit of the song for them. Naturally, I kindly remind them that I am a mobile disc jockey, not a wedding singer, but I will be glad to let them listen to the song to see if it is one they want to add to their play list.

Friends of mine have asked me about lyrics and it seems I always draw a blank when it comes remembering them. Even for my favorite songs—those I sing along with on the radio—I do more humming and mumbling than singing because I don’t know the actual words. Of course if anyone asks me questions about who sang a song or the year it was released or how high it went on the chart, then I’m ready to hold an intelligent conversation with them.

Don’t misunderstand me though. Even though my weakness is not being able to sing a song, I am a firm believer that it is an important part of a mobile disc jockey’s job to know the message of a song before playing it for an audience. The recognition that lyrics set the mood of an event is one mark of a true professional who is striving for excellence. At this point you probably think that the remainder of this article will be about the profanity or sexually oriented content which has infiltrated much of today’s music and how we need to steer clear of these songs when playing for a general audience that one typically finds at a wedding reception. Instead, my focus here is on knowing enough about the lyrics of songs in order to set the right mood at an event, in particular, at a wedding reception.

## TAKE A LISTEN

About fifteen years ago, as my wife and I attended a wedding reception as guests, I recall listening to the songs the DJ played during the social hour while we were waiting for the bride and groom to arrive. Though they were lively, he played many songs that made me wonder if he knew something about the bride and groom’s relationship that the rest of us didn’t. Instead of filling our ears with sounds of everlasting love, many of the songs were about breaking up or cheating. These songs were obviously not being played “on purpose” to send a subliminal message about the couple or their love. He was playing them simply because the music was upbeat. Sure we were all tapping our toes, but in my mind a “dismal” mood had been cast over what should have been a prelude to a grand celebration of love and romance. This experience made me always question my own selection of social hour music and to caution other DJs to be choosy in their initial musical offerings played for guests to listen to as they await the bride and groom’s arrival.

For every wedding, we ask our clients what genre of music they want played for the social hour. Many choose lively jazz or modern love songs. For many years, we had more requests for American Songbook selections (Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Tony Bennett) than any other category. Recently the trend has been for R&B music from the Sixties

## Soul Songs To Set The Mood

SONG	ARTIST
1 HOW SWEET IT IS TO BE LOVED BY YOU	MARVIN GAYE
2 I CAN'T HELP MYSELF (SUGAR PIE HONEY BUNCH)	FOUR TOPS
3 MY GIRL	TEMPTATIONS
4 I WAS MADE TO LOVE HER	STEVIE WONDER
5 YOU SEND ME	SAM COOKE
6 REACH OUT I'LL BE THERE	FOUR TOPS
7 IF I COULD BUILD MY WHOLE WORLD AROUND YOU	MARVIN GAYE
8 LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND	DEON JACKSON
9 MORE TODAY THAN YESTERDAY	SPIRAL STAIRCASE
10 SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED I'M YOURS	STEVIE WONDER
11 MY GUY	MARY WELLS
12 WISHIN' AND HOPIN'	DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
13 THE WAY YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO	TEMPTATIONS
14 THIS WILL BE (AN EVERLASTING LOVE)	NATALIE COLE
15 SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL	DRIFTERS
16 IT TAKES TWO	MARVIN GAYE / KIM WESTON
17 LEAN ON ME	BILL WITHERS
18 FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE	STEVIE WONDER
19 STAND BY ME	BEN E. KING
20 AIN'T NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING	MARVIN GAYE / TAMMI TERRELL
21 I SECOND THAT EMOTION	SMOKEY ROBINSON & MIRACLES
22 TOO BUSY THINKING ABOUT MY BABY	MARVIN GAYE
23 GIMME LITTLE SIGN	BRENTON WOOD
24 AIN'T NO WOMAN (LIKE THE ONE I'VE GOT)	FOUR TOPS
25 HEAVEN MUST HAVE SENT YOU	ELGINS
26 HIGHER AND HIGHER	JACKIE WILSON
27 PRIDE AND JOY	MARVIN GAYE
28 YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING	TEMPTATIONS
29 BABY I LOVE YOU	ARETHA FRANKLIN
30 I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER	DIONNE WARWICK
31 I'LL TAKE YOU THERE	STAPLE SINGERS
32 WITH THIS RING	PLATTERS
33 THEN CAME YOU	DIONNE WARWICK & THE SPINNERS
34 (SITTIN' ON) THE DOCK OF THE BAY	OTIS REDDING
35 MY BABY LOVES ME	MARTHA REEVES & THE VANDELLAS
36 THIS MAGIC MOMENT	DRIFTERS
37 SOOTHE ME	SAM COOKE
38 THE SHOOP SHOOP SONG (IT'S IN HIS KISS)	BETTY EVERETT
39 BABY, I'M YOURS	BARBARA LEWIS
40 QUICKSAND	MARTHA REEVES & THE VANDELLAS
41 WONDERFUL WORLD	OTIS REDDING
42 SOMETHING ABOUT YOU	FOUR TOPS
43 SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW	FANTASTICS
44 DARLIN' DARLIN' BABY (SWEET TENDER LOVE)	O'JAYS
45 COULD IT BE I'M FALLING IN LOVE	SPINNERS
46 KISSIN' IN THE BACK ROW OF THE MOVIES	DRIFTERS
47 SWEET SOUL MUSIC	ARTHUR CONLEY
48 STAY	MAURICE WILLIAMS & ZODIACS
49 LET'S GET MARRIED	AL GREEN
50 LOVING YOU IS SWEETER THAN EVER	FOUR TOPS



by such artists as The Four Tops, The Temptations, Martha Reeves and The Vandellas, Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding. Often people will just ask for Motown artists (or similar songs from other labels) to set the mood. Looking at this issue's list, the majority of the songs are from the 1960s, with a few from the late Fifties or Seventies. What sets these songs apart from many others is that not only a "toe-tapping beat" but the lyrics—don't forget, that's what we are talking about here—are about everlasting and true love. Remember: An hour before the guests first meet you and hear your first note, they have witnessed two people commit the rest of their lives to each other. You are now entrusted to help celebrate this union. Songs such as "How Sweet It Is" or "This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)" were made to be played for joyous occasions such as a wedding reception. The songs on this issue's list should provide you with a good resource to ensure that the lyrics are not going to be about heartbreak.

#### DECEPTIVELY CHEERFUL

There have been songs that I've played during the social hour that I later discovered were about a soured relationship. One example is the 1966 hit by the Isley Brothers (remade by Rod Stewart with Ronald Isley in 1990) "This Old Heart of Mine (Is Weak for You)." It has a great beat, and by the tone of their singing one would think that it is celebrating true love. Well, perhaps it IS celebrating "true" love, but it is a one-sided love affair. Actually reading the words to the song we find, "This old heart of mine been broke a thousand times... Lonely nights that come... hurting me ... heart weeps for you." The Isleys sing it with such happy voices that one might actually hear a "love" song instead of a heartbreak song. There was one couple who requested (and we played) Al Green's "Here I Am (Come and

Take Me)" for their first dance. For the most part, it could be mistaken for a love song appropriate for a first dance. However the lines, "A love that I cannot have, you broke my heart into half... you'll find yourself lost and alone on a darkened street" don't lend themselves to a song for a newly married couple's first dance. Song titles can be misleading too. Take for example

The Four Tops' classic Top 10 hit "Standing in the Shadows of Love" from 1966. After only the first line of the song, one should mark this off any "true love" list, since the jilted lover says he is "Waitin' for the heartaches to come." Later in the song we find phrases like "You've taken away all my reasons for livin'" and words like "alone," "desperately," "cry" and "misery." A song like this played during the cocktail hour sends a message completely the opposite of why everyone has gathered for this particular event.

As we strive to be the best mobile disc jockeys possible, we must realize that the appropriate "love content" of a song is probably more important during the beginning of a wedding reception than at any other time during the event. When people first enter the room and begin to settle in to wait for the bridal party to arrive and while they are enjoying dinner they are more inclined

to be listening to the songs and absorbing the mood that the lyrics are helping to create. Once the dance portion of the event begins, there is less tendency of the crowd to think about the love content of a song. They might still be attuned to other offensive lyrical content, but that's another article. Remember that you always have a choice of what to play and what to recommend to a bride and groom or any client—this is equally true when they ask you to play something they can listen to or when they ask you to play something they can dance to. **MB**

**AN HOUR BEFORE THE GUESTS FIRST MEET YOU AND HEAR YOUR FIRST NOTE, THEY HAVE WITNESSED TWO PEOPLE COMMIT THE REST OF THEIR LIVES TO EACH OTHER. YOU ARE NOW ENTRUSTED TO HELP CELEBRATE THIS UNION.**



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# Thank You for the Music: The Legacy of ABBA



From '70s mega-success  
to *Mamma Mia!* mania

BY RICK ELLIS

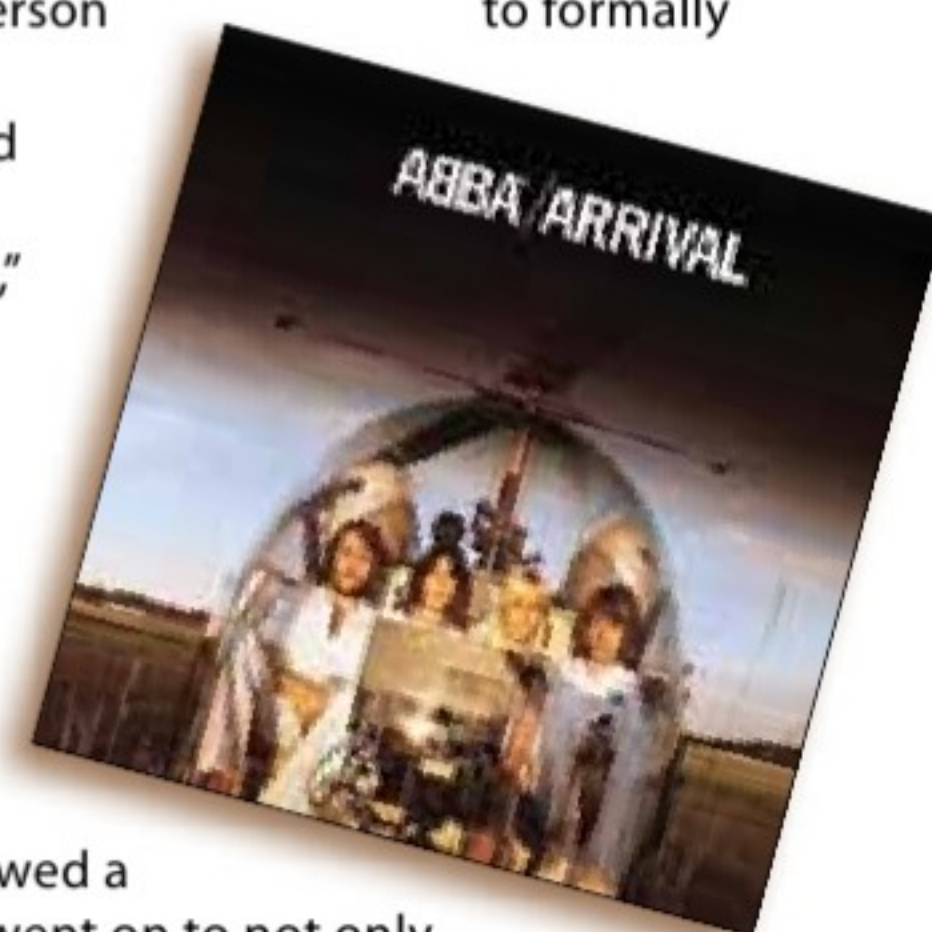
I can remember the first time I ever really heard an ABBA song. It was 1999, two years before I would become a professional disc jockey—and I had no idea how much it would change my life. I was watching the Disney Channel with my son when a short video came on between shows; it was a group of teenagers singing a very familiar song with a techno-pop beat. When the chorus hit I recognized it as “Mamma Mia,” but this wasn’t some Swedish band from the ‘70s I was listening to.

I’m not ashamed to admit that once the video was over I packed my son into the car and we went to Target in search of the CD *The ABBA Generation* by the A\*Teens. I spent the next five days listening to nothing else, and soon had all the songs running through my head constantly. I realized that it was a cover band, but the songs were great! Naturally, I wanted to learn more about the band that inspired the A\*Teens.

## MARRIAGE OF MUSICAL TALENTS

As one of the most successful pop groups of the 1970s, ABBA captured the attention of listeners around the globe with their soaring harmonies and clean-cut image. The four individuals who would become ABBA were already pop stars in their native Sweden. Bjorn Ulvaeus was a member of the popular folk music group The Hootenanny Singers and composed most of the band’s original material, which was performed in Swedish. Benny Andersson was a member of the Swedish rock band The Hep Stars and wrote his first number one hit in 1967. While touring with The Hep Stars, Benny met a young jazz singer named Anni-Frid Lyngstad whom he would go on to marry. Agnetha (pronounced Ahn-yet-ah) Faltskog was only 17 when she had her first number one song in Sweden, and between 1968 and 1972 had eight hits, becoming Sweden’s most popular singer. She also captured the heart of Bjorn, the two were married in July 1971. Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid gave their first public performance on a beach on the island of Cyprus in the spring of 1970, where the two couples were vacationing together. The four musicians were singing for themselves, but soon a group of United Nations soldiers gathered around them, and from their reaction Bjorn and Benny knew they had something special. But it took Polar music label founder Stig Anderson to formally bring them together as a group.

While they were all well-established as solo artists, at first it was rough going as a quartet. Their first single, “Ring, Ring,” failed to qualify as the Swedish entry for the prestigious Eurovision song contest in 1973 the band immediately began planning for 1974. Benny, Bjorn and Stig were convinced that the contest was the best way to make not only Sweden aware of ABBA but the rest of Europe as well. The song they submitted was “Waterloo” an upbeat pop track that showed a distinct glam rock influence. “Waterloo” went on to not only win the Swedish preliminaries but their performance, featuring a conductor dressed as Napoleon, blew the competition out of the water at the international finals, easily winning the contest and giving ABBA the chance to tour Europe and perform on TV shows in several countries. “Waterloo” also gave the band their first number one single in huge markets such as Australia, Germany and Great Britain. In the US, the song only managed to make it to #6 on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart, but still prompted a quick visit across the pond for an appearance on The Mike Douglas Show.



## CONQUERING POP

The band didn’t tour much after this initial period, preferring to stay in





Sweden recording their music and putting out some of the first music videos. 1976 was the year that ABBA's star truly began to rise after the release of their Greatest Hits album which included the mega hit "Fernando." The song would top the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart, making it ABBA's first number one single in the US. With the release of "Dancing Queen" in 1977 the band solidified their place in the disco market and on the US charts, and mastered the entire pop realm with "Take a Chance on Me" and "The Name of the Game." Wildly successful tours of Australia and Europe followed. In 1979 the band finally did a concert tour of North America.

#### FALLING APART

Agnetha and Bjorn announced in January 1979 that they were divorcing, understandably leading to speculation about the band's future; but they continued to work together as a group. (One of ABBA's biggest hits, "The Winner Takes It All," released in 1980, is believed to be about the end of Bjorn and Agnetha's marriage.) In early 1981 Benny and Anni-Frid also filed for divorce, marking the beginning of the end for the group. In December 1982 after the release of ABBA: The Singles the group made an appearance on British television and then started working on solo projects. They have not performed together as ABBA since.

#### YOUTHFUL TRIBUTE

1999 saw a revival of ABBA's music, albeit without an actual reunion, with the release of The ABBA Generation by the A\*Teens. The CD was a compilation of ABBA covers reinterpreted with techno beats and flavored for the young pop fans. The group was originally called the ABBA Teens but the name was changed after a request from Bjorn and Benny, in order to avoid confusion, as the members of the group (Dhani, Sara, Marie and Amit) were not the sons and daughters of ABBA members. This name change would be a blessing in disguise as it allowed the band to go on to create original music without being forced to include ABBA tracks on every new release. The ABBA Generation sold more than 3 million copies worldwide.



The band went on to release four more CDs before following in ABBA's footsteps with the announcement in 2004 that they were "taking a break" to work on solo projects. The official end of the band came in 2006.

#### MAMMA MIA! THE MUSICAL

After more than 35 years and \$350 million dollars in record sales ABBA is

again as popular as ever, due mainly to Mamma Mia!—the musical based on the band's hits, which premiered in 1999 at London's Prince Edward Theatre. The show marked the first time a narrative musical had been attempted using one group's existing pop songs.

As of 2009, each week Mamma Mia! grosses more than \$8 million in worldwide ticket sales. With a total of 11 global productions, more than 24 million people have experienced the show, accounting for nearly \$1.4 billion dollars in revenue. Due to the incredible success of the stage production, Mamma Mia! The Movie was released in 2008, starring Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan.

Mamma Mia! is an upbeat, funny musical, which breaks the pattern of blockbuster musicals like The Phantom of the Opera and Les Miserables—fantastic musicals, but essentially very sad stories. In contrast, Mamma Mia! is the kind of show where you're allowed to stand up scream and shout it's like a rock'n roll concert brought into musical theater; it's two hours where



you are allowed to forget yourself and get lost in the music.

There is something very endearing about Mamma Mia! It's unpretentious, kind of goofy, and it never pretends to be anything other than what it is. After the show premiered on Broadway, one theater reviewer described the show as "a singing Hostess Cupcake," and noted that "when the going gets tough the tough want comfort food." If you get a chance to see it, I challenge you to watch it and not smile or tap your feet. You are guaranteed to catch yourself singing along with at least one of the songs.

#### FOREVER ABBA

While ABBA has never officially announced the end of the band, and calls for a reunion of ABBA have been made for years, all offers and deals have been refused. A reunion of sorts did take place in February of 2005, when Agnetha, Benny, Bjorn, and Anni-Frid were all on hand for the Stockholm premier of Mamma Mia!. Though they arrived separately and sat apart from one another, it was the first time since 1982 that ABBA's loyal fans could see all four members in the same place at the same time. The band also reunited for the Swedish premier of Mamma Mia! The Movie on July 4, 2008. At this appearance they stated that they never intent to officially reunite for a performance.



In the history of worldwide record sales, ABBA still trails only Elvis Presley and the Beatles. One of the reasons why ABBA songs hold up so well is that they're so well made. If I had to choose two words to describe the music of ABBA, I would have to say "timeless pop." To Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid I want to say to all of you, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for the music. **MB**

Rick Ellis is the owner and operator of Music Express DJ based in Merritt Island, Florida, home of Kennedy Space Center. He began performing on stage at age six. While in college he toured Russia, Romania and Hungary as a featured soloist and dancer. He started Music Express DJ in 2001 and now specializes in video music parties.





# Magical Musical List

Sometimes you CAN leave the Top 200 home

BY RYAN BURGER

Every now and then, even with all of your music programming experience and all the consultations you do with a bride and groom, there is NO WAY you can improve upon the list they have laid out, exactly, song for song.

This past weekend I got to experience the wedding and reception of my brother Shane and Erin, his girlfriend. They have been together a long time and are now officially tying the knot. Their wedding and reception was held at a beautiful historic farm called the Whiterock Resort, part of the nearly 5,000-acre (that's about 8 square miles) Whiterock Conservancy ([www.whiterockconservancy.org](http://www.whiterockconservancy.org)) in Northwest Iowa. As his brother, and ultimately ending up as the DJ for the event, I was very interested in this place as we had never been there before and I'm always interested in new things. Along with the unique location, there was a different kind of music list.

Shane had worked excessively on exact requests planned for his wedding and he got "almost exactly" what he asked for (as I'll explain later). He is a person with eclectic tastes, and Erin, his bride, fits with him perfectly. His friends who were invited to the wedding also have very similar tastes in music. Shane and Erin's choices ranged from conventional stuff like the Jackson 5 or Madonna to more interesting tracks like Bjork, Ohio Players or Arcade Fire. In less capable hands, the wide variety of



music, including many songs you'd never hear on traditional radio or at a typical wedding, might cause a reception to crash and burn. But this case, the mix ended up fitting the night absolutely perfectly. (See the actual list in the sidebar.)

The only thing I had to do to facilitate the party was throw in two tracks near the beginning of the festivities for my parents and their circle of friends, who I have entertained for many times in the past: "Wooly Bully" and "Shout."

Another interesting part of the list was that, while it featured many of the artists I have played before like Frank Sinatra, CCR and Elvis, they were tracks that we hardly ever play. Amazingly, even the guests that the music wasn't really planned for, like the 25 or so friends of my parents in attendance, were dancing throughout the entire night!

Without Shane's extreme knowledge of the music fitting his style, there is no way I could have done this event and have it come off as well as it did. In retrospect, if I was only given their first couple dances and four or five other songs (as most couples give us, along with an overall vibe of their musical tastes) I still would not have been able to keep 70 to 100% of the people on the dance floor all night like my brothers exact requests did. Wow—what a night! **MB**

SONG NAME	ARTIST
MY BABY JUST CARES FOR ME	NINA SIMONE
LET'S STAY TOGETHER	AL GREEN
LOOKIN' OUT MY BACK DOOR	CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
STOP! IN THE NAME OF LOVE	DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES
ABC	JACKSON 5
WOOLY BULLY	SAM THE SHAM
SHOUT	ANIMAL HOUSE
SUSPICIOUS MINDS	ELVIS PRESLEY
MOVIN' ON	ELVIS
THE BEST IS YET TO COME	FRANK SINATRA & COUNT BASIE
I'VE GOT YOU (UNDER MY SKIN)	FRANK SINATRA & COUNT BASIE
THANK GOD I'M A COUNTRY BOY	JOHN DENVER
OLD MAN FROM THE MOUNTAIN	MERLE HAGGARD
TENNESSEE WALTZ [RADIO TRANSCRIPTION]	PATSY CLINE
SWEET DREAMS (OF YOU)	PATSY CLINE
ONE ROAD MORE	THE FLATLANDERS
WOULDN'T IT BE NICE	THE BEACH BOYS
WOO HOO	5678'S
SWEET JANE (FULL-LENGTH VERSION)	THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
COOL IT DOWN	THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
TWISTING THE NIGHT AWAY	SAM COOKE
TAKE ME TO THE RIVER	AL GREEN
STEVIE WONDER - SUPERSTITION	STEVIE WONDER
LOVE ROLLERCOASTER	OHIO PLAYERS
GET UP (I FEEL LIKE BEING A) SEX MACHINE	JAMES BROWN
BILLIE JEAN	MICHAEL JACKSON
FLASH LIGHT	PARLIAMENT
LIKE A PRAYER	MADONNA
MIXED BIZNESS	BECK
BIG TIME SENSUALITY	BJÖRK
RAY OF LIGHT	MADONNA
HOTEL YORBA	THE WHITE STRIPES
CH-CHECK IT OUT	THE BEASTIE BOYS
DANCING CHOOSE	TV ON THE RADIO
CITIES	TALKING HEADS
EARTH INTRUDERS	BJÖRK
SUMMERTIME CLOTHES	ANIMAL COLLECTIVE
THE CRYSTAL CAT	DAN DEACON
NO CARS GO	ARCADE FIRE

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CHICKEN DANCE
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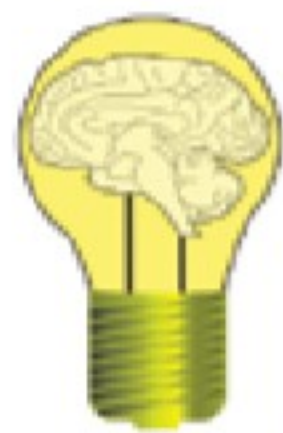
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# XSP: Potent Mobile Sound

American Audio's XSP Series of powered speakers wraps heavy-duty sound in lighter packages

BY J. RICHARD ROBERTS

**T**he XSP Series, American Audio continues to widen their menu of options when it comes to powered speakers. These speakers provide an affordable but power-packed and sonically excellent option as an additional sound system for single operators, or for the disc jockey service that doesn't want to part with as much green as many higher-priced powered speaker systems demand.

The XSP-15a and its smaller siblings 10a and 12a all have a built in mixer, one (10a, 12a) or two (15a) line inputs, a mic input, bass and treble control, and master volume. The XSP members additionally have a passthrough output that you can use to send your signal to another speaker, should you need more sound reinforcement and do not want to run another XLR to the extra speakers.

With 200 watts available to you on the 10" 2-way XSP-10a, 300 watts on the 12" 2-way XSP-12a and 400 watts on the 15" 2-way XSP-15a, these speakers have plenty of power for the wide variety of events at which mobile disc jockeys find themselves entertaining. While I would recommend something else for school dances with 300 or more in attendance, these will cover you well for smaller school dances and many weddings. Additionally the weights continue to go down on these types of molded powered speakers, with the 10a weighting in at 31 pounds and the big 15a cabinets down under 60 pounds, so they are easy to transport. On this series of speakers (as compared with previous American Audio powered speaker releases) they have also improved the molded handle on the side of the speakers.

The best use of the speakers for my company, and the way they are going out this weekend, is as wedding ceremony sound. With a single XSP-15a at the ceremony we are able to put a microphone on the officiant, another for the singer, and still have a channel for some accompaniment music played through an MP3 player hooked up to the stereo RCA jacks on the back. **MB**

[www.americanaudio.us](http://www.americanaudio.us)



## Bright Musical Beamz

The Beamz Interactive Music System lets lasers make the mix.

BY RYAN BURGER

**A**lways looking for something unique, and being a fan of gadgets and cool inventions that have something to do with either games or music, I was thrilled when a big box showed up from Beamz Interactive. The Beamz unit is a heavy-duty, well-built MIDI-equipped musical instrument and effects controller that even someone with no musical skills (like myself) can make some cool music with.



To do so, I just placed my hands between any one of the six laser beams that extend from one side of the W shaped unit to the other. By interrupting the light source you can create different sounds from each beam. I'll try to explain here, but to understand this unit fully, you need to experience it in person; or at least check out the <http://thebeamz.com> website to see one in action.

### FOR REMIX DJS

With the recent release of Beamz Studio software they turned the laser musical unit into a MIDI controller that DJs can assign to trigger different effects, sounds and loops. This part of the software makes it so DJs that are working on their own music mixes can perform with it in their studio or live in front of the crowd. It's like having a laser-based sample player for audio.

### FOR MOBILE DJS

For most disc jockeys, the above-mentioned aspect of Beamz functionality is not as important as how it might interact with the songs that they regularly play, and may want to do something different with. While the currently available library of tracks optimized for use with The Beamz is only around 100 or so, it includes favorites that DJs play on a regular basis, such as "Funky Town," "Get Ready for This," a great mixable version of "Billy Jean," "In Da Club," "Ice Ice Baby/Under Pressure," and the newer "Just Dance" by Lady Gaga. Earlier this year, Beamz Interactive signed a deal with Sound Choice distribution which will get plenty more tracks into their library within the next couple months. This will allow you to pop samples in and create your own mix live at an event. You could really make a show out of it for school dance attendees, which where I can see the popularity of this being strongest. The system comes with 30 original songs plus a coupon good for five additional free songs upon registration of the unit online.

The Beamz is available in both a consumer (\$199.95) and professional version (\$299.95). The only difference is that the pro version includes the new studio software, which allows musicians and DJs to compose their own interactive music using existing MIDI, WAV and MP3 libraries.

Overall, The Beamz is a very well built unit with software to match it. The growth and the adoption of this unit as a performance piece for club/remix and mobile DJs really will depend on the growth of the library of tracks and effects. Stay tuned! **MB**

<http://thebeamz.com>



## Music for Living, Not Just for Making a Living

The Livio Radio uses the Web to help you enjoy your personal music more

BY RYAN BURGER

Although it isn't something to be used at your events or in the direct operation of your mobile disc jockey service, the Livio Radio has become part of my home. DJs enjoy listening to a variety of music just as much, or more so than the average person, making this internet radio appliance perfect for your home or your office. Personally, I also use it for a lot of talk radio shows that are tough to find in local traditional broadcast radio.

This is an internet-based radio that works without the need of a computer. It connects via wifi or ethernet to your home or office network and configures in approximately five minutes to allow you to hear over 10,000 stations broadcasting online. Or, you can create a customized station just for you.

By a customized radio station I mean that you can program in that you like a certain artist. In my case I put in Michael W. Smith (a Contemporary Christian artist), and it built a playlist of other similar artists in the same genre, then streamed a customized set of music down to my radio. Plus, just like the Pandora service that works on regular laptop and desktop computers, you can vote as to whether you like a certain artist's song or not, and it will play less or more of that artist on your custom radio station.

At LivioRadio.com it says "The Livio Radio, through Pandora and the Music Genome Project gives its users the power to be their own personal DJ, one that actually pays attention to what listeners like and dislike." Of course that doesn't mean mobile DJs, but those radio cousins that have programmed music lists they have to stick to.

The tie between your account on your PC and the account on your Livio Radio is automatic. While you can program in your Pandora related radio stations from the Livio, it works better if you log on to their site and pre-program them using a



regular computer so that you aren't using the dial to manually put in each letter of the artist's name. The radio syncs with your online Pandora account and pulls down your preferences as it's working.

The actual radio is about the size of a small shoebox with a relatively big front mounted speaker, a display for choosing stations (self-programmed or from a directory), a headphone mount, six buttons to navigate and vote on the songs, and a large dial for volume and other controls. On the back of the unit is the power switch, along with 1/8" inputs and outputs. This is a classy looking unit. Combining good looks and the capability to provide a personalized music experience, the Livio Radio can really enhance the private side of your musical life.

Tons more information on the Livio Radio can be found at LivioRadio.com or at Pandora.com. **MB**

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# The Mark of Innovation

Jack O'Donnell discusses Numark—past, present and future

**J**ack O'Donnell, the president and CEO of Numark, shares a little about the past, present and future of his company, which has produced dozens of products that have changed the DJ landscape.

Today, Numark continues to develop professional digital tools and strives to maintain a tradition of innovation. Here we get some of the inside scoop on Numark's synergy with the other companies in its group, and what's on the horizon at the crossroads of DJ hardware and software development.

**Ryan Burger:** Jack, tell us a little bit about yourself and a little bit about where Numark has come in the last 20 to 30 years.

**Jack O'Donnell:** I'd be glad to, Ryan. It's nice to talk to Mobile Beat.

I've been in the DJ business now for—oh god, sometimes it gets depressing to think—probably about 25 years. I've been with Numark just about 15 years. I acquired them in 1991 and got them really started in 1992. I was working for Stanton Magnetics at that time and had been with them for a number of years, and I was their vice president of sales and marketing.

Numark was fully dedicated to the DJ market. It had actually run into a few financial problems when they tried to move their factory from Japan to California. They were and still are the number one DJ company in the industry. And as they made their transition from manufacturing from Japan to California, they essentially put themselves up for sale, as they were struggling to make that transition. I acquired them in '91 and left Stanton Magnetics and have been with them ever since.

**RB:** Wow...looking through the first copy of *Mobile Beat* from April/May 1991...one of your competitors is challenging Numark and the new twin-drawer CD player model; the "duel of the duals." It also talks about the DM-1075 and the DM-1175. So ever since *Mobile Beat* has been around, you guys have been part of the market—and you were around before we were. Fantastic.

**JO:** That's a great mark.

**RB:** Tell us a little about where things have come. [Besides] the mobile DJ arena and everything, you guys do a lot of other things also, especially now with the other brands and everything. Give us a little bit of an idea about the whole corporation.



**JO:** Well, we did along the way acquire or start new companies. In addition to Numark, we also have Alesis, Akai Professional, Ion Electronics, MixMeister software, and Wavefront Semiconductor. So it's all...around the MI group and all in some way synergistic. Our engineering staff complements—and each company complements each other, and I think that gives us a competitive edge to bring the newest in technology to the market.

**RB:** What's your style, your philosophy as to why you create different products?

**JO:** Well, I think the audio industry in general and DJ industry in particular depends heavily on what the computer industry is doing. It depends on them for technology. We're a small industry compared to the computer industry, but as they develop chips or technology for the computer industry, we look it intensely and figure out how it could be applicable to the DJ, to our customer.

So one year you might have a DSP chip that is very interesting and could be used for sound effects, for example. The IT might not have been built if it was just for our small industry, but it becomes affordable and built in the millions, and we take what the industry provides us with and then write the software so it's applicable to our needs.

**RB:** Where do you see this whole thing going, without telling me what you're releasing next year? What are some of the other products that you've developed that cater specifically to the mobile DJ?

**JO:** Well, the industry is definitely in a period of flux, and we're trying to cater to the different requirements. Some of it is leading technology. We're reinventing ourselves—or reinventing the tools of the trade. And of course, that's crystal ball reading, which is very, very difficult. And then some of it is still utilizing the tools that everyone is familiar with, whether it be a turntable and a mixer or then CD and a mixer, in making sure we're providing and not ignoring the customer that's quite comfortable with that.

And then as we look forward, we say, okay, what is the 18-year-old, the 16-year-old looking at, and what are they getting used to? Well, of course, they're quite used to their hard drives, computers and iPods. And the DDS-80 is an example—and HD Mix is an example of utilizing the latest in technology but complementing what people have been using right along. The form factor for the HD Mix will look very familiar to someone that's using a CD Mix, and will afford them a lot more versatility; and the individual that's just entering the market, they will see something familiar to them also. They'll see the hard drive and CD-ROM and start thinking, "This is something I see on my computer or my iPod." So we're trying to anticipate and grow with our customers, or before our customers, and we're trying to give them their anticipated needs.

But getting back to the computer analogy, if you look at the HD Mix for the DDS-80, you can see we're using some very sophisticated ICs that have become available—tremendously powerful ICs that have become available because of the computer industry. You can see fabulous resolution on a small screen that's become available because of the technology that we see in LCD panels and computer screens. So we can give these things to our customer at prices that were unavailable and products that were unavailable a few years ago.

**RB:** MixMeister recently became part of the Numark family. You also have connections with Serato. You're definitely branching out and you're mak-

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*ing the hardware that ties with the software. Tell me a little bit more about those types of relationships...*

**JO:** Sure. Serato we recognize as being a tremendously stable, versatile, and popular software for the traditional DJ, and kind of looked at that and studied what would be needed with that product to make it grow and transition, just like we do with our own products. And we concluded that a sophisticated controller was the perfect complement to this sophisticated software.

So about two and a half years ago, we collaborated with Serato initially to start talking about what this hardware piece should look like and how it would work, and what type of software would be best with it and how it would work with the hardware. And that's where our NS7 came from... And we'll be seeing that out this Christmas season.

**RB:** *[In reference to] your connection with the video game industry, tell us about Scratch... Being a DJ and a video game junkie and a computer nerd all in one, it interested me. How did that all come together?*

**JO:** Well, one of our companies, Ion, is involved intensely with the game industry, and they're building a product called Drum Rocker, which is a premium drum controller for Rock Band. That was just released a couple of months ago and it won the Best Hardware award at the E3 show out in California. It seems tremendously well received.

Well, we looked at that part of the market, which included, of course, Guitar Hero and Rock Band, and our intent with our product was both to give a better interaction with the game and to possibly move gamers into being a musician. And looking at that, it became obvious that there was another product that should be built out there; recognizing the tremendous popularity of Guitar Hero and Rock Band only led us to say, okay, there should be a software game that gives the experience of being a DJ... And through a number of contacts, we started working with a group out in California called Seven Studios. They're working in collaboration with us on a DJ game called Scratch. It will, I believe, do for DJs what Guitar Hero does for guitarists. It brings it to a whole different group, and hopefully will bring a whole group into our industry, too.

**RB:** *There are all kinds of areas to our DJ industry in the way of equipment. How do you want Numark to be seen within the spectrum of gear available?*

**JO:** Well, I guess what we strive for is rather robust and rugged software and hardware; a premium product that we try very hard to produce at a reasonable price, so that there's great value to the consumer, but no shortcomings in terms of quality

**RB:** *I assume you have further goals to take everything a lot further than where we are. Is Numark where you want to be at this point?*

**JO:** Well, right now we are the largest provider of DJ equipment to the industry, and love that position. But our goal is to bring this industry even further along. We think we're going to do that with this new game, Scratch.

The idea that there's a lot of musically inclined and musically talented people that perhaps didn't have the option of being trained as musicians but still want to express themselves with music, I think that's where the DJ—that's where we see the highest and best use for DJ equipment. That's where we thrive and that's what we're addressing. And right now, if we can bring that to more people, well, great. The experience of music will be even broader.

**RB:** *Gotcha. Fantastic. In general, if people want to find out more about Numark they can check out Numark.com or hit a link from the MobileBeat.com website. They can also see you guys at one of the trade shows or go into one of their local dealers and ask them to show the latest from Numark.*

**JO:** Well, Ryan, I do want to just thank Mobile Beat and their continued exploration of our industry and what they've done for the industry. **MB**



## FOR ADDED EFFECT

**N**umark recently announced the release of a new effects controller for use with the company's NS7 premium software-performance controller, called **NSFX**. NS7 DJs can now take advantage of Serato ITCH's effects capabilities with NSFX. Designed in collaboration with Serato for the ITCH system, NSFX is designed to deliver seamless integration and hands-on control of the wide range of effects built into ITCH. Those effects will sync automatically to the tempo of the track to which they are applied, allowing for musically satisfying results every time.

DJs can attach NSFX to NS7's integrated laptop stand for convenient access to effects controls. Designed to match the high-quality fit and finish of NS7, NSFX delivers the same robust, professional feel that NS7 users have grown accustomed to. Users simply plug NSFX in via USB, which will activate the effects functionality in the latest version of ITCH. All parameter controls are intelligently pre-mapped and no driver installation is needed. Club DJs will appreciate NSFX's light-up controls that indicate each control's setting and/or status for visual feedback in virtually any lighting environment.

NS7 is a complete computer-performance solution for cutting-edge DJs, delivering the feel of motorized, adjustable-torque, aluminum turntable platters complete with vinyl, slipmats and 45-RPM adapters, while offering Strip Search (patent pending) virtual-needle drop controls and a host of other innovative features. Separating the two turntable decks is a premium DJ mixer with replaceable, digital VCA crossfader and line faders, firm, rubberized knobs, rugged switches and buttons.

Numark and Serato developed a communication protocol for communication between NS7 and the computer that sends MIDI data over a single USB cable at more than ten times the standard resolution. The result is extremely precise control.

NS7 contains a high-quality, 24-bit digital audio interface with mic/line input and headphone and system outputs. A single USB cable carries all audio and control data between NS7 and the computer for simplicity of system configuration and minimal setup time. The unit's heavy-gauge metal housing and sturdy components have all been designed for durability on stage and road alike.

(Serato™ is a trademark of Serato Audio Research.)

[www.numark.com](http://www.numark.com)





# The Three Income Streams

## Part 2

Maximize your income by blocking the out-flow of needless operational costs and reeling in every possible opportunity

BY STU CHISHOLM

In part one of this mini-series I covered the two main income streams for mobile DJs: our paycheck for doing gigs (the most obvious) and up-sells: those goods and services we might offer in addition to our entertainment services. Yet there is a third income stream that is seldom discussed, or even thought about, that can be just as critical to your profit margin: overhead.

### OUTWARD BOUND

Any business has operating costs, also known as "overhead." For a mobile DJ, these costs include advertising and promotion, music and equipment purchases, insurance, licensure (required by some states and Canada), printing, mailing, office supplies, wardrobe and so on. If not carefully considered, these costs can escalate, cutting into a business's profit margin. I'll detail some of these in a moment, but first I'd like to address one cost that is also seldom mentioned: TIME.

You've no doubt heard it said that "time is money." This is always true. If you're not using your time to generate income, then you're using it to lose money. Playing "Mafia Wars" doesn't count as "working on the computer." Eliminate those time wasters while at work, and set definite hours for when you're "on the clock" and off.

Many DJs think that the only time periods they can charge their clients for are those hours spent at the event itself. If this were true, then profit margins would be outstanding. Wages would be at or above \$100.00 per hour. Yet we all know that we spend much more time on our business and events beyond our performances. Those hours spent meeting with clients, returning phone calls, making runs to the dry cleaners, office supply and other locations and any and all office work need to be compensated. They also need to be conserved. If you're spending four hours when two will do, you're literally costing yourself money.

For me, mixing is a big part of my show, so a large chunk of my time used to be spent taking the BPMs (beats-per-minute) of songs and adding

the information to my database, and later ripping the CDs to MP3. Two or three hundred songs on a handful of CDs could take days. If you consider mixing as vital to your performance as I do, I've discovered a few time savers that really work.

The first is "BPM Made Easy," a chart that appears on page 26 of my book, *The Complete Disc Jockey*, available through the Mobile Beat online bookstore. Originally submitted to Mobile Beat by Jeff Leskiw (DJ Rolex) from Winnipeg, Canada, this chart gives you an accurate BPM by taking only 33 beats of a song, rather than a full minute as previously required. Contrary to popular opinion, manual BPMs are often more accurate than those gathered by beat counters and computer programs. This has cut my time down by nearly two-thirds.

### LET 'ER RIP!

I then spent the better part of a day putting CDs into the computer and waiting for them to be ripped to MP3. This is not only time consuming, but it ties up your computer, since taxing its resources by answering e-mails or doing other jobs can lead to bad rips. Lucky for us, those problems are now history.

Promo Only, Top Hits U.S.A. and other music subscription services now offer their music already ripped into the MP3 format. It's not only a time saver, but cost savings too, dropping my music overhead from nearly \$200 per month for the individual CDs down to less than \$60 by opting for Top Hits U.S.A.'s new MP3 DVD, which has all the current issues on a single disc. A database file is also included, reducing the time it takes to add updates to my personal working database.

### HOOKING CLIENTS, SAVING DOLLARS

If you want to catch fish, you need to have a good location and good bait. For a mobile DJ looking to catch brides, he or she needs to know where they



are and how to capture their interest. And, to continue our fishing analogy, sometimes we need to explore different areas to see where the better "fishin' holes" are and what bait works best. Because this is America, and there is no limit to advertising options and what you can spend, costs must always be carefully considered.

#1 is to keep track of where your leads are coming from, and get specific. Don't just have a broad "referral" category, but break it down into three: referrals from past clients, referrals from banquet halls and referrals by other vendors (photographers, videographers, etc.). You might even want to track what specific halls and vendors are sending. Similarly, don't just have one broad category for online referrals, but track each source (The Knot, Respond.com, Eventective, Gigmasters, etc.). Today, there is also more than one phone book. Don't just list "Yellow Pages," but WHICH yellow pages. (The term was never trademarked, so other publishers use it along with AT&T.) Track how many leads you get from bridal shows, along with how many of those leads actually translate into bookings.

**MOST IMPORTANT:** Now that you're tracking each source, do an audit



**YOU'VE NO DOUBT HEARD IT SAID THAT "TIME IS MONEY." THIS IS ALWAYS TRUE. IF YOU'RE NOT USING YOUR TIME TO GENERATE INCOME, THEN YOU'RE USING IT TO LOSE MONEY. PLAYING "MAFIA WARS" DOESN'T COUNT AS "WORKING ON THE COMPUTER."**

each time you do your taxes. This will give you a clear picture of which sources are working and which ones should be cut. Even though it's really cool to see your company logo big and bold in the Yellow Pages, if you're getting more business via the bridal shows, then it might be a better strategy to cut down that phonebook ad to a simple listing and do a few more shows. View all advertising with a critical eye and make cuts without mercy. As Donald Trump points out, it's not personal; it's business.

If all of your efforts seem lackluster, it might be more about your "bait"—what's in your advertising—than where it appears. While I'm no authority on this topic, I suggest that you peruse the Mobile Beat bookstore at [www.mobilebeat.com](http://www.mobilebeat.com), which has a lot of great material on this topic. Jay Conrad Levinson's Guerilla Marketing is essential, and the Instant Sales Letters CD-ROM is a compilation of great ad campaigns and marketing materials by Tom Quiner of Breakthrough Marketing. These are great sources to start pumping up your materials. I also highly recommend contacting Dan Nichols at [www.businesslaunchexpert.com](http://www.businesslaunchexpert.com). Dan is a working DJ who really knows his stuff when it comes to marketing and branding, especially for mobile DJs.

At first glance it might seem like I'm recommending more spending, yet the end result will be just the opposite: Your advertising will be more effective, giving you more clients per dollar spent over the long haul. Any expenditures now are an investment in your future.

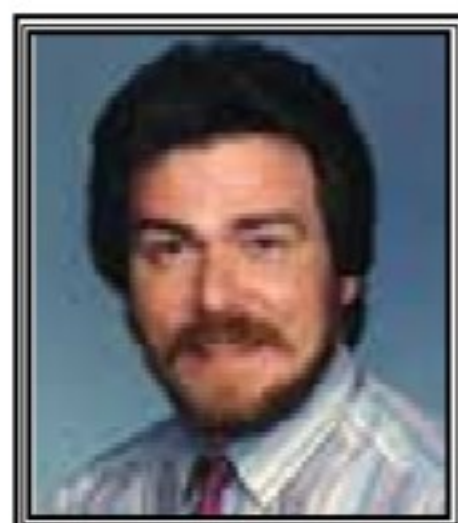
#### **LAW & ORDER (DA-DONK!)**

Once you've got your overhead down, it's time to re-evaluate your security routines and precautions so that you don't lose what you've already got. Is your liability insurance and equipment coverage up-to-date? Is all of your gear in road cases, and do you truck pack it so that nothing is damaged in transit? Are your trailers/vehicles secure? Is it time to replace any frayed straps, bungee cords and tie-downs? For a comprehensive look at these issues, see my series "DJ Security: Protecting Your Business, Clients and Yourself" (featured in Mobile Beat, March through September 2006), or an expanded version of the series appearing in chapter six of "The Complete Disc Jockey."

The tips and tricks I've shared here are all designed to help you maximize your income by minimizing the outward trickle of revenue, often through "leaks" that you aren't aware of. If I've helped you focus on some new area that needs attention, then my job here is done.

Until next time, safe spinnin'! **MB**

Stu Chisholm, a mobile DJ in the Detroit area since 1979, has also been a nightclub DJ, done some radio, some commercial voice-over work and has even worked a roller skating rink! Stu attended the famous Specs Howard School of Broadcasting and has been a music collector since the age of seven. Stu's guide to the profession, *The Complete DJ*, was recently released by ProDJ Publishing.



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### ARE YOU A "ONE-HIT WONDER" ?

**Are you wondering what other opportunities are out there, beyond your current "gig," where you can use your entertainment skills? Looking for fresh income streams for your DJ business?**



Stu Chisholm, a 30-year veteran mobile DJ, has worked at nightclubs, raves and rinks, and for a wide variety of events and clients. He has also worked in radio and has done voice-over work. He shares his years of experience and research into ways to "supplement your DJ income...with DJ INCOME" in this concise, practical, info-packed guide.

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## THE COMPLETE DJ

**A Comprehensive Manual for the Professional DJ**

# ProDJ Publishing





**M**obile entertainment companies have been caught in the economic downturn just like other businesses. While things appear to be stabilizing (if not improving), the art and science of sales forecasting is always a challenge for anyone in the business. How can you plan your revenue farther ahead than the gigs you have already booked? How do you adjust prices when you don't know what the market will bear? This article looks at forecasting from a practical point of view and offers three action tips to help deal with revenue planning amidst changing market conditions.

Author's Disclaimer: This article discusses an approach to forecasting sales revenue based on a generic pricing strategy. It does not suggest prices for your specific situation.

#### LONG VS. SHORT VIEW

A key part of your long-term pricing strategy is to forecast your revenue several years in advance. When you look at your sales plan over a longer period of time, you can apply the fundamentals described in our last article to best advantage. In the meantime, here is a simple formula to start the process of planning revenue.

$$\text{Revenue} = \text{units} \times \text{average selling price}$$

Sounds simple—and it is. This formula applies to all mobile entertainment people, regardless of what you do (DJ, technician, agent, VJ, KJ, etc.). A unit is a show date and average selling price is based on many dates vs. just the highest or the lowest. The following grid illustrates the concept and is easily adaptable to any situation.

	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR	YEAR TWO	YEAR THREE
SHOW DATES PER YEAR	30	60	90	120
AVERAGE \$ PER DATE	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$2,000
TOTAL PERFORMANCE \$	\$15,000	\$45,000	\$90,000	\$240,000

Remember that this is a simplified example, just to show the fundamentals of revenue planning. When you do this with your own numbers, you will find that it is often a "wake up call" that 1) you aren't charging enough and/or 2) you aren't booking enough shows. How do I know that? Because I've done it myself, and I know people who have done it and ended up changing their pricing and promotion strategies as a result.

When your three-year objectives are staring you in the face, it is much easier to make operational business decisions than if nothing were written down, or if you were only thinking a few weeks ahead.

#### DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

Successful mobile entertainers have a flexible pricing program that can be scaled to client budgets. Others have no policy or program. The temptation is to take whatever you can get and be stuck in a rut. Here are examples of the consequences of NOT having a realistic pricing strategy.

- Never enough revenue to make a living. Too many mobile entertainers think that price increases either never come or will simply be offered by their customers. There's an old ironic expression that goes like this: "I plan to lose \$100 on every date, but make it up on volume." Yikes! It doesn't work that way. If you are losing money on every date, figure out how to either increase fees, lower costs, or both.
- Pricing out of the market. Beware of believing that the one-off high-end private party in Aspen you just booked now represents your everyday asking price. Suddenly jacking up your rate may seriously alienate your local and repeat clients.
- Costs get out of control. As discussed in reference to the three pricing strategies in the last issue (low cost producer, differentiation, and hybrid), it is essential to understand your expenses before you determine selling prices. It helps to make things scalable to the event, such as how much sound and lighting gear to bring or what mode of travel to use.
- Inaccurate image or reputation. Ask yourself how you would like to be regarded relative to pricing. While there is no right or wrong answer, see which of the following pricing images best suits you. The comments below are from the client or promoter point of view.

***"Always plays for the door (or tips)."***

***"Cheap—I don't know how they stay in business."***

***"Penny-wise and pound-foolish."***

***"Willing to work for anything."***

***"A great value—we all make money."***

***"Premium quality, premium price."***

***"Over-priced—you pay for the name."***

Mobile entertainers frequently adopt a differentiation pricing strategy, either consciously or unconsciously. Specifically, many believe that their product is unique and price it as high as possible. Those with business plans and market awareness will best understand the differentiation approach and work toward it long term. That's part of an overall plan to make more money, have more fun, and stay in business longer. Even a booking agent paid on commission works to drive acts' prices higher whenever possible.

Others may look out in the market and set prices at or below what



competitors are charging. While this can be a viable approach, I believe that many mobile entertainers “leave money on the table,” unconsciously assuming that they have no influence on customers’ budgets or willingness to pay.

#### HOW TO AVOID PRICING PROBLEMS AND OPTIMIZE REVENUE

Pricing problems lead to revenue problems. While you may not be able to “name your price,” there are three things you can do to avoid problems:

- **Action Tip 1:** Understand the RANGE of prices charged by others who do what you do in your market area...before you establish or quote prices in the market place.
- **Action Tip 2:** Do the revenue planning using the three year view and formula presented above before making major business decisions like buying new gear, hiring additional people, or investing in promotional material.
- **Action Tip 3:** Understand that you have a higher degree of control over how things change over time than you might first imagine. This ties to the importance of doing things consciously vs. unconsciously.

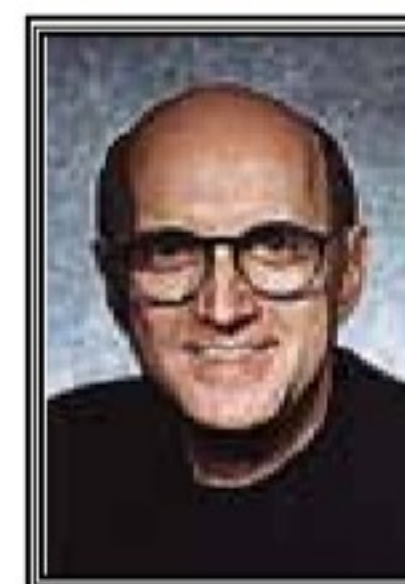
#### HERE'S THE POINT...

Not enough mobile entertainment people actually have a conscious pricing strategy. As a result, they default to charging too much or too little. Either may seem to work, but “going to extremes” frequently leads to problems, especially in today’s volatile market. Some charge too little and end up subsidizing the business by working the proverbial day job. Others burn

**NOT ENOUGH MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT PEOPLE ACTUALLY HAVE A CONSCIOUS PRICING STRATEGY. AS A RESULT, THEY DEFAULT TO CHARGING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE.**

out prematurely due to overwork at under-market prices. Others charge too much too soon, and can’t get enough work to stay in business. A little planning goes a long way in terms of preventing those problems. **MB**

John Stiernberg is founder and principal consultant with Stiernberg Consulting ([www.stiernberg.com](http://www.stiernberg.com)). With over 25 years experience in the music and entertainment technology fields, he currently works with audio and music companies and others on strategic planning and market development. His book *Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters* is published by Hal Leonard Books. You can contact John via e-mail at [john@stiernberg.com](mailto:john@stiernberg.com) and follow him at <http://twitter.com/JohnStiernberg>.



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# Being Prepared to Save the Day

Training? I've been DJing for years.  
Why do I need training?

**S**everal years ago I attended my first DJ convention. I didn't think that I really needed any training because I had been DJing for years. I mean, how much more can there be to this field? However, I soon realized that by not being there, I was missing a lot. Not only were the other DJs (my colleagues) fun to be around, the training seminars were exceptional and opened up worlds of new opportunity for my DJ service. Plus, more specifically, if not for the training seminars, one of my receptions this year would have turned out a lot differently—in a word, badly!

What follows is the story of that event. To protect their identity, the bride's and groom's names are fictional, but the rest of this story is 100% true.



BY MR. JODY LITTEN

## JUST ANOTHER WEDDING DAY

It's Saturday, 7 AM, and the day starts just like many others when I am to perform at a wedding. I'm busy finishing up the last-minute details, checking my list twice, and going over the name pronunciations and my event flowchart. The tasks at hand this day are to direct the ceremony and then perform at the reception. The event had been planned, everything down to the last detail, months before. My team is ready to go.

At noon, my assistant and I arrive at the reception hall to set up there first. I will then travel to a remote location for the out door ceremony. We get everything set up, tested, and put on standby for that evening. My assistant gets to relax at the reception hall as I set out for the outdoor ceremony. At 2:30 PM, I arrive at the ceremony site, set up my extra sound system and do a sound check. So far everything is going just as planned. The only annoyance is 90°+ heat with about 70% relative humidity. By 5 PM the ceremony has concluded without a hitch.

As the first guests start to arrive at the reception hall, my assistant starts to play the pre-programmed cocktail music. About fifteen minutes later, I finally arrive and do the formal greeting that I learned at one of Mark Ferrell's MC training workshops. I pull some of the specialty music I will need for the formalities and then walk around to talk with guests at their tables, taking requests and seeing if they need anything. I look over the grand introduction sheet again and read over the Love Story that I will be presenting later in the evening. As I finish looking over the Love Story, I can't help thinking how excited I was the first time I attended Mark and Rebecca Ferrell's Love Story workshop. It was a year earlier and was like nothing I had ever experienced before. I had been looking for a way to be more involved at my weddings, a way that would be very classy, emotional and unforgettable, and the Love Story concept fit the bill.

## FOR BETTER...AND WORSE

Twenty minutes later, the wedding party finally starts to arrive and my assistant and I rush to meet them in the foyer. I congratulate the bride and groom. But as I lean in to hug them both, I notice that the bride, Julia, isn't looking too well. I ask if she's felling all right and she says, "I'm OK. I'm just tired and a little hot." I proceed to get everyone lined up for the grand entrance, double-check their names with my flowchart and then return to my booth. I start the music, juice the crowd a little, and then we're off. "Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to..." My assistant keeps the entrances looking smooth and choreographed. After the last bridesmaid and groomsman walk in, my assistant closes the doors to build the drama, and I start to cross-fade to the custom-edited main entrance song. I let the music build suspense and at just the right moment, I announce, "Will you please stand and make welcome Mr. and Mrs. Robbie Hart." The doors burst open and in walk the bride and groom to an explosion of cheers and applause. My grand entrances used to be just



one song that everyone had heard before, but after a Randy Bartlett training seminar, that all changed.

With the custom introduction and greeting accomplished, the wedding party makes their way to the buffet, and I start playing my transition-to-dinner music list (thanks to Mr. Jim Cerone). As I start to invite the last reserved table to the buffet, I notice the bride is still not looking well. She is sitting at the main table, her head supported by her hands, staring down at her food. I invite the next two tables to the buffet and then go to check on her. I move behind the main table between the bride and groom, place my arms on the backs of both their chairs, drop to one knee, and ask, "How's everything going?" The bride doesn't even look at me. Her husband looks up and says, "She doesn't feel very well. She hasn't eaten a thing today, and I think the heat and excitement has gotten the best of her." I express my concern and mention that they can relax for about half an hour while everyone finishes dinner, before I will need them for the formalities. I return to my booth feeling a little anxious.

I inform my assistant that the bride still doesn't feel well and that we might have to change tactics for this one. We continue to play the dinner music, then suddenly the bride is ushered to the restroom by her father and the groom. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes go by with no sight of the bride. By this time, I'm starting to get really concerned, so I go to see what's happening. I run into the groom and ask, "How's Julia doing?" He says, "She passed out. She's been out in the van for ten minutes and we're trying to cool her down. If she feels up to it, I'll see if I can get her to come back in so we can proceed. Is that OK?" I nod yes—we really needed to get things started.

As I re-enter the hall, I notice several guests gathering their things. Are they leaving? That's right—they're leaving! Right after dinner, due to the lack of interaction and involvement, the guests are starting to get bored and are leaving. I was afraid this may start to happen with such a delay in the proceeding.

About three minutes later, the bride and groom walk in and sit at the main table. I go over to Julia to ask how she's feeling. She looks up at me with tears in her eyes and says, "I'm sick. I think I'm just going to go home." As the DJ, is it my responsibility to take care of the bride? If you were the DJ at this event, how would you have handled this situation?

During our extensive planning meeting, Julia had shared with me that she had been planning this day since she was old enough to watch Cinderella. I know that if I don't do something quickly, the only memory she will have of her reception will be how much of a disaster it was. I know Julia feels pressured to continue and that if she doesn't, she's "going to ruin everything." So I ask her if it would be all right to take the reins and stray from our original plans, doing something other than the formalities and giving her additional time to relax without the pressure. She and her husband eagerly agree.

#### MASTERING THE MOMENT

I quickly return to my booth and tell my assistant

what I have in mind. He smiles and says, "Great idea!" and turns to start pulling some specialty music. I grab a cloth napkin and run into the kitchen. I soak it in cold water and pack it with ice. I return to Julia, who has her head down on the table and ask her to raise her hair so I can place the napkin on the back of her neck. I return to my booth, grab my wireless mike, and make the announcement, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to get things started a little differently than I normally would, with an interactive game. The game I'm referring to is called the Hart Scavenger Hunt, and I'm going to ask Robbie, our groom, to help me pick out the players." About a year earlier, I had learned how to be more interactive by using games at my receptions from DJ Scott Faver, who is known as the Game Master. I had attended an ADJA training seminar in Wichita, Kansas, and Scott was one of the presenters and, boy, was it paying off now!

With all the players chosen, we start the game. It is a hoot and everyone, and I mean everyone, is involved, even Grandma. About halfway through the game, I notice something and almost fall over: To my surprise, Julia is sitting up and laughing! I think to myself, "It's working!" The game gets wild and crazy and, of course, the real goal for playing the game is to have fun, but this time it also provides just what is needed to recharge the bride's depleted batteries.

As the game ends, I motion for the photographer to get a picture as I announce the winner with the groom. As planned, my assistant starts playing "Celebration." I yell the famous last quote from Footloose, "Everybody dance!" and the party is underway. As I return to my booth, my assistant says, "You did it! The bride is up walking around and mingling with the guests." I'd had a feeling that if I could remove the pressure, cool her down, get some food in her, and ultimately give her body TIME to recover, it might be enough to save the reception.

From that point on, we are back on track and the night ends, as planned, at 10:30 PM with a Hollywood-style grand send-off that I had learned about from reading Peter Merry's book *The Best Wedding Reception Ever*.

So, if you have never attended a training seminar or DJ conference like Mobile Beat in Las Vegas, I ask why not? What are you waiting for? You will enjoy spending time with individuals who share the same passion as you, and the friendship and camaraderie you will build will be unforgettable. But not only that—you can see how the ideas and skills gleaned from my learning experiences helped me rescue one bride's wedding day dreams from a sure meltdown. There's always something new to learn, and you never know when it might help you save the day! **MB**

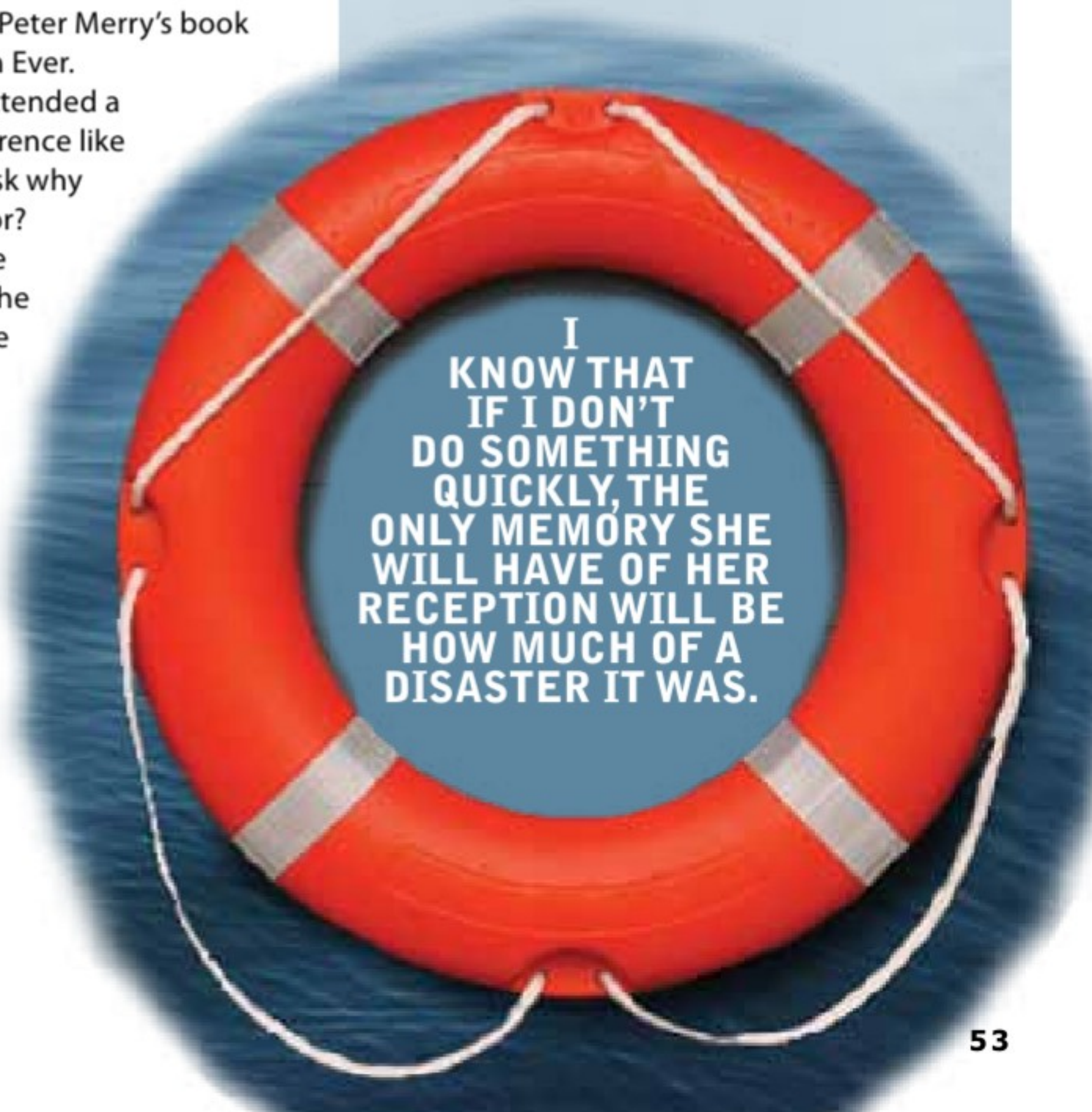
Jody Litten is the owner of Enchanted Nights Entertainment in Newark, OH.



## POWER SOURCES

I would like to thank the following individuals who have helped me take my entertainment company to levels I never thought I would ever achieve:

- Randy Bartlett  
[www.theonepercentsolution.com](http://www.theonepercentsolution.com)
- Jim Cerone  
[www.jimcerone.com](http://www.jimcerone.com)
- Bryan Dodge  
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- Peter Merry  
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# Sharpen Your E-Marketing Tools

## Part 2

BY ANDY "CUBBIE" POWELL

**A**nother great Guerilla Marketing technique for the Web is the use of mass e-mails. Come up with a monthly e-mail blast that is informative for your clients.

Some columns you might include each month are "Meet the DJ" or a "What's New at XYZ DJ Company." But it's good to go beyond the basics and try to think out of the box. My company also does a little segment on "Wedding Traditions and Folklore." They are fun and unique facts, answering questions like: Why do you have a bridal party? Why do you exchange rings? Why do you toss the bouquet? etc. We might also include a handy article from a recent Mobile Beat or Modern Bride discussing wedding etiquette or other useful topics. You'll of course want to include specific info on your latest offers, with plenty of links back to your website. And lastly in the e-mail but certainly not least in importance, we ALWAYS ask for a referral as we "sign off."

Adding e-mail newsletters to your marketing armory can help drive traffic to your website, attract new customers, and increase brand loyalty

**ADDING E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS TO YOUR MARKETING ARMORY CAN HELP DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE, ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS, AND INCREASE BRAND LOYALTY AMONG YOUR EXISTING CLIENT BASE.**

among your existing client base. It helps build a bond of trust between you and your customers. It's also the fastest, most cost-effective way to communicate your latest news and special offers to your prospects. By sending your prospective clients regular messages using one of the most popular modern communication tools you keep yourself and your DJ business at the front of their minds. So, when they next need your type of service, they think of you first.



Your primary mailing list will be made up of anyone who has contacted you through your website, and potential clients from bridal fair sign-up sheets and other places where you've gathered leads. In other words, people interested in getting in touch with you, as well as past and current clients. Make sure your website visitors are encouraged to sign up for your newsletter and assured that their details are protected by the relevant privacy policies. (Keep in mind that using any other unqualified e-mail lists can get you labeled as a spammer. Also, remember that you should include an "opt-out" link in your e-mails as a courtesy.)

There are numerous software packages which enable you to compile and distribute your e-mail newsletters to your database of contacts. Look for a system that allows you to monitor the results (How many have opened your e-mail? How many have clicked through to your site? How many have unsubscribed? etc.) so you can fine-tune your communications to maximize results.

Another key aspect of success e-mail marketing is customization. You can tailor-make your blasts to suit specific subscribers or groups. For example, Bride A might already be a client, while Bride B is possibly going to use your service. Target your current customer with specific, detailed reception tips and a minimal "sales pitch" and send Bride B more of a sales piece with some tips, but something different—maybe shorter snippets or more general info (like our folklore piece mentioned earlier).

With a little work, your e-mail newsletter can quickly prove an invaluable source of business as you introduce new promotions, offers, products, or services directly to your potential clients. **MB**

Andy "Cubbie" Powell is the author of the essential DJ-entrepreneur's guide to the big marketing picture, *Guerilla Marketing Companion for DJs*, along with Jay Conrad Levinson.



(Excerpted and adapted from *Guerilla Marketing Companion for DJs*, by Andy Powell and Jay Conrad Levinson, available from ProDJ Publishing. (Go to [www.mobilebeat.com](http://www.mobilebeat.com) and click on "Bookstore.")

## E-Marketing Solutions Online

There is certainly no shortage of software to help you accomplish your e-mail marketing goals (as a Google search for "e-mail newsletter software" will show you!). Freeware or shareware options are available, many of which integrate with your current e-mail client (i.e. Outlook) or database software (i.e. Access). Another way to go is with a web-based service. We list here five of the most popular providers among the many out there. Most services provide free trials to help you decide the best fit for your business.

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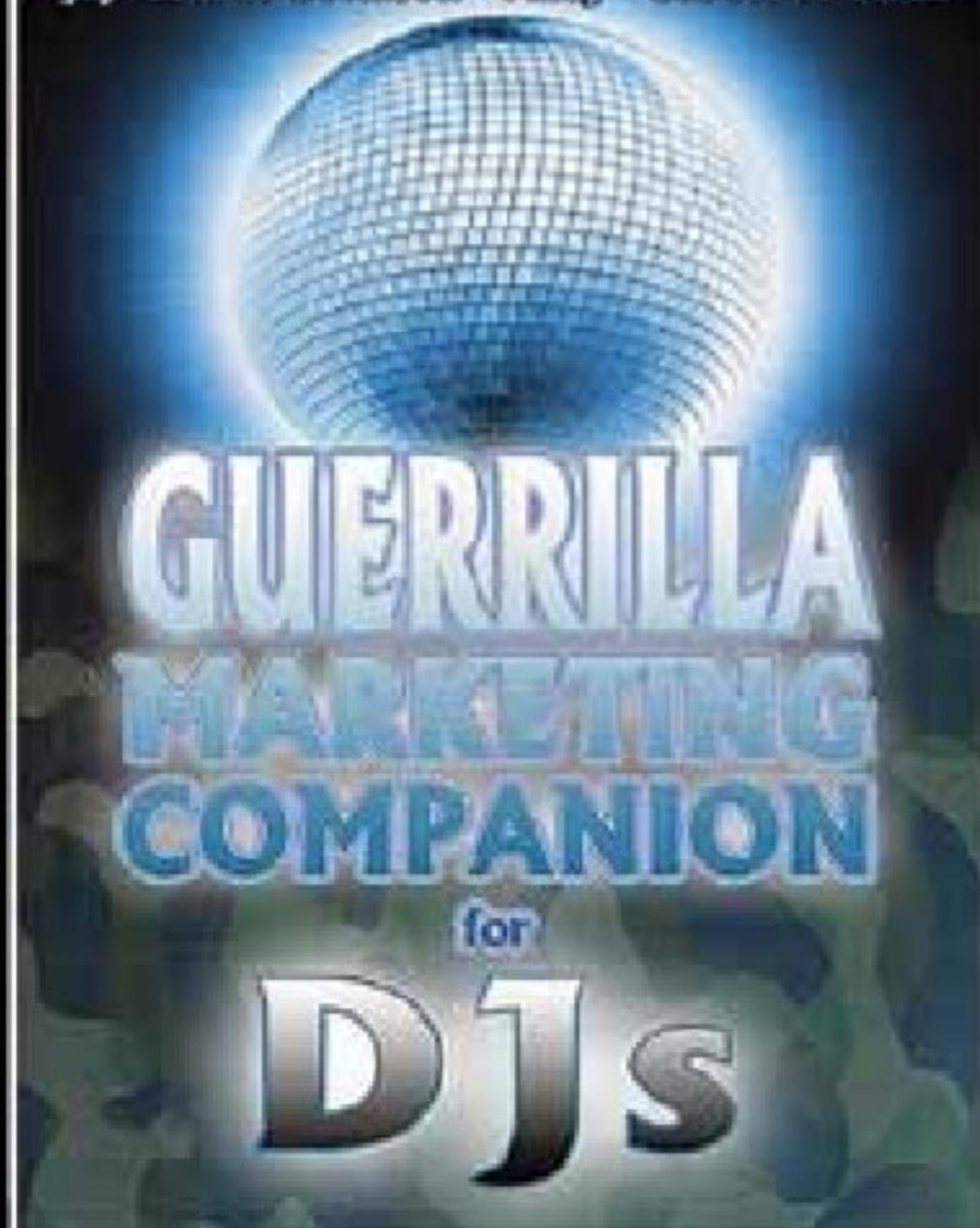
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# I'm a DJ Too!

The musical key to the current "my cousin the DJ" phenomenon

BY MARK JOHNSON

**A** strange phenomenon occurred this last April. Let me explain. My church had their semi-annual flea market and I usually attend as one of the vendors, selling gently-used household items and extra records from my collection. Every year, in addition to selling these items, I hand out brochures describing my DJ business, as the popularity of this flea market generates a lot of traffic and gives me the chance to meet many potential customers face to face.

As regular people would slow down or stop to look at my wares, I used my DJ personality to approach them and talk about hiring me for any upcoming parties. While not the most slick of advertising campaigns, business is business and we all could use any extra bookings.

Since it was April, I knew that the upcoming high school graduation and communion/confirmation season was just around the corner and I should be somewhat successful. I usually hand out around 200 brochures, generate around 15 phone calls and actually get around 4-5 bookings from this exercise. Not too bad for a few hours just standing around.

## THE NEW LOW COST OF DOING MUSIC

Imagine my surprise when, for some reason,

**THROUGH THE YEARS, THE HARDWARE WAS SIMPLY A PURCHASE AWAY... THE MUSIC WAS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE, AS IT WAS COSTLY AND TIME-CONSUMING. NOW IT'S SIMPLY A 10-MINUTE FILE TRANSFER TO ACCESS THOUSANDS OF SONGS.**

many of these potential customers declined taking my brochures, stating that someone that they intimately know is also a DJ. Not that they simply knew a DJ, but that a relative or close friend IS also a DJ.

Game over. Obviously, any conversation with this person would be a waste of time as whatever my price was would be incredibly more than the very small price or no price at all that this DJ offers to close friends and family. Over the years I've certainly run into this deal breaker before but not to the noticeable extent that occurred that day.

Let's try to see how this occurred and what we can do about it. First, the obvious effort of acquiring a vast library of music has been tremendously reduced with the MP3. Years ago, if you wanted to add a second system to your existing DJ business, you would have to replicate your original collection of vinyl or CDs. This effort by itself was enough to deter such expansion until that time could be justified by a larger book of future business that needed more than one system.

Through the years, the hardware was simply a purchase away. Go to your local music equipment store, plop down your credit card and walk away with your second (or third) sound system. But the music was the biggest obstacle as it was costly and very time consuming. Now it's simply a 10-minute file transfer to move thousands of songs to a second computer.

The collection of all of the traditional equipment that a DJ needed has been seriously replaced with a laptop and a pair of powered speakers. The convenience factor that we professional DJs enjoy is also enjoyable by the general public wishing to be a DJ. They may not be using professional DJ software, but rather winging it with iTunes or Windows Media Player. But the audience may not even know the difference.

Even as recently as a few years ago some of the regular DJ hardware companies were selling \$300 "complete CD DJ systems." But that required roughly a \$4,200 additional collection of CDs (300 CDs x \$14). We all have seen some people with a binder full of CDs calling themselves a professional DJ. I guess their use of the word "professional" simply means that they get paid for their efforts and nothing more.

## DJING FOR THE LONG HAUL

Could I have gotten any of those flea market people as my customer? Probably not. Even the most slick DJ salesman would have a tough time convincing them based on all of the soft features that we strongly promote (experience, complete musical knowledge, crowd interaction, professional equipment etc). The prospect would simply



reply with a polite smile, indicating that his or her friend (cousin, brother, uncle etc) knows the music that they need better than I would.

Is their party destined to be a complete failure? Of course not. We know what it will be missing, but perhaps they don't know (or care) what will be missing. Their mumbling on the microphone, stumbling through segues (if any) and other unprofessional expressions are often easily accepted as "it's only cousin Fred, it's okay".

Do we cry over losing these smaller parties? Many DJs have left these types of parties behind in lieu of the more lucrative wedding business, where their complete professional DJ offering is more appropriate. But small parties are usually useful to fill in other time periods and every event, no matter how large or small, offers us a chance to get more business by referral.

The Greyhound bus company has the slogan: "Leave the driving to us." I guess if you're traveling across the country, riding a bus would be a good idea. But if you're just driving a short, unimportant trip, then driving yourself seems like the more convenient and cost-effective option. Likewise for the smaller DJ-wannabe. No real loss if they mess up a backyard party. But I would not want to hire cousin Fred for my own wedding if he's not a true professional DJ.

This lower threshold of entry exists very easily in a business such as ours. With no regulation, certification or other true professional measure to use, any person with a hard drive full of songs and some speakers can call themselves a DJ. Now, more than ever, we need to focus on anything BUT the music, elaborating on our professional approach to everything from the sound system, communication with the customer, attitude during the event, guest interaction, event protocol etc. The music is the easy part. **MB**

*For over a decade, Mark Johnson has offered his insightful and often incisive perspective on issues of importance to mobile DJs here in Reality Check.*



*His articles grow out of his own experience and observations of other DJs during his travels. Always providing an alternative view, his views are informed by a wide knowledge of the entertainment technology field and the professionals who work in it.*



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# Certifying the Mobile DJ

Should mobile DJs be part of a certification scheme similar to other wedding professionals? An opinion piece.

BY MIKE "DR. FRANKENSTAND" RYAN

**I have to applaud the National Association of Mobile Entertainers (NAME) for making the effort to certify the Mobile DJ industry. According to its web site, it has "...introduced the Endorsed Professional Entertainer (EPE) program as a building block to our goals. This program requires members to take their standards to a higher level and hopes to set them apart from other professionals in our industry."**

I think certification is something all professional DJs need. Here's why: Certification is the standard used almost universally in the hospitality industry to recognize professionals who have achieved a high level of expertise in their respective fields. In my opinion, mobile DJs are part of the hospitality industry. Many have argued that DJs are part of the entertainment industry, and yes, some DJs certainly are. But personally, I have received far more business from caterers, meeting planners, special events and wedding planners—the key members of the hospitality industry.

## ONLY ALPHABET SOUP?

How important are certification designations? It's almost unheard of that someone would become a hotel catering manager without the Certified Professional Catering Executive (CPCE) designation. The same applies to meeting planners, wedding planners, photographers, and florists etc. In the hospitality industry, college degrees are important but it is the certification that matters most. Here are some of the certification designations of professionals wedding DJs work with:

- \* Floral Designer - Certified Floral Designer (CFD)
- \* Meeting Planning - Certified Meeting Planner (CMP)
- \* Photographer - Certified Professional Photographer (CPP)
- \* Special Events - Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP)
- \* Catering Executives - Certified Professional Catering Executive (CPCE)
- \* Wedding Planners: Professional Bridal Consultant (PBC) and Professional Wedding Vendor (PWV)

The International Special Events Society (ISES) puts the value of certification into perspective: "When it's time to do your taxes you probably feel more comfortable bringing your business to a CPA." The same applies for medical treatment from an MD, or legal advice from a JD (lawyer). You get the idea.

While I encourage NAME and their certification process, I do part company with them because NAME is a for-profit organization. The American Disc Jockey Association (ADJA) is also for-profit. It is my understanding that most, if not all of the other associations in the hospitality industry are non-profit. I think the credibility factor is lost when the certification is administered by a for-profit organization. Whether the perception is right or wrong, I think there is an implied bias built in.

## MAKING IT THROUGH BASIC TRAINING

And the certification paths for most of the other professionals within the hospitality industry are grueling, compared to those of the NAME certification. This is not meant as a criticism. Examining the NACE (National Association of Catering Executives) certification, you get a better appreciation of just how difficult their process is and why their CPCE designation for catering pros is held in such high regard.

Let's look at the CPCE application form. Number four states: "Upon your application's approval, you will receive the Certified Professional Catering Executive Study Guide....[including] all the material you need to know to become an expert in the seven core competencies of the exam: Accounting, Beverage Management, Catering Services, Contracts and Agreements, Event Management, Food Production, Sales and Marketing."

**CERTIFICATION IS THE STANDARD USED ALMOST UNIVERSALLY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TO RECOGNIZE PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERTISE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS. IN MY OPINION, MOBILE DJs ARE PART OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.**

First, the application itself has to be approved. Then, after extensive preparation (look at all the items on that list!) the candidate has to sit for the exam. The exam takes place three times a year in either Georgia or Florida, on specific dates and times only. Just how hard is the exam? CPCE candidates are offered and encouraged to participate in a 7-week web-based training program to prepare for it.

Most of the hospitality industry certification processes include a point system. But it can be a Catch-22-style dilemma. Often you can't gain important points without working in the field; but you can't work in the field without the certification. For example, to be eligible to sit for the CPCE exam applicants must have a minimum of 30 points: "...10 points are awarded for experience in Catering or Event Management." But as I mentioned, you more often than not need the certification to work in management!

## CERTIFICATION PERCEPTION

What does the public think about certification? According to the Professional Photographers of America (PPA), "Certification is the most widely recognized consumer credential. Consumers may not know a lot about professional photographers [or... substitute your profession here] but they know that certification should ensure professional quality goods and services."

Let's face it: Being a mobile DJ is very attractive. Play music and make money! Who wouldn't want to do that? Right now it's easy to be a DJ. For many in the industry, it's like a guy going out with a couple of lawn mowers and calling himself a "landscape architect." Certification is something that clearly and reliably separates the real professionals from the amateurs. We can talk to clients about being insured, having a business license, the best equipment, huge libraries of music, what association(s) we belong to, etc., but it seems like it would be a lot easier and far more impressive if we could say we are Certified DJs. Personally I would prefer the designation of Certified Professional Disc Jockey (CPDJ) or some similar insignia that at least includes the letters "DJ"

So, what's the answer to the mobile DJ certification question? It appears that neither of the two major DJ associations are going to go back to being non-profit. Therefore, I hope that they can work together and with other important players in the industry to design a far more comprehensive certification process that will once and for all establish industry-wide, agreed-upon standards that we, as professionals so sorely need. **MB**



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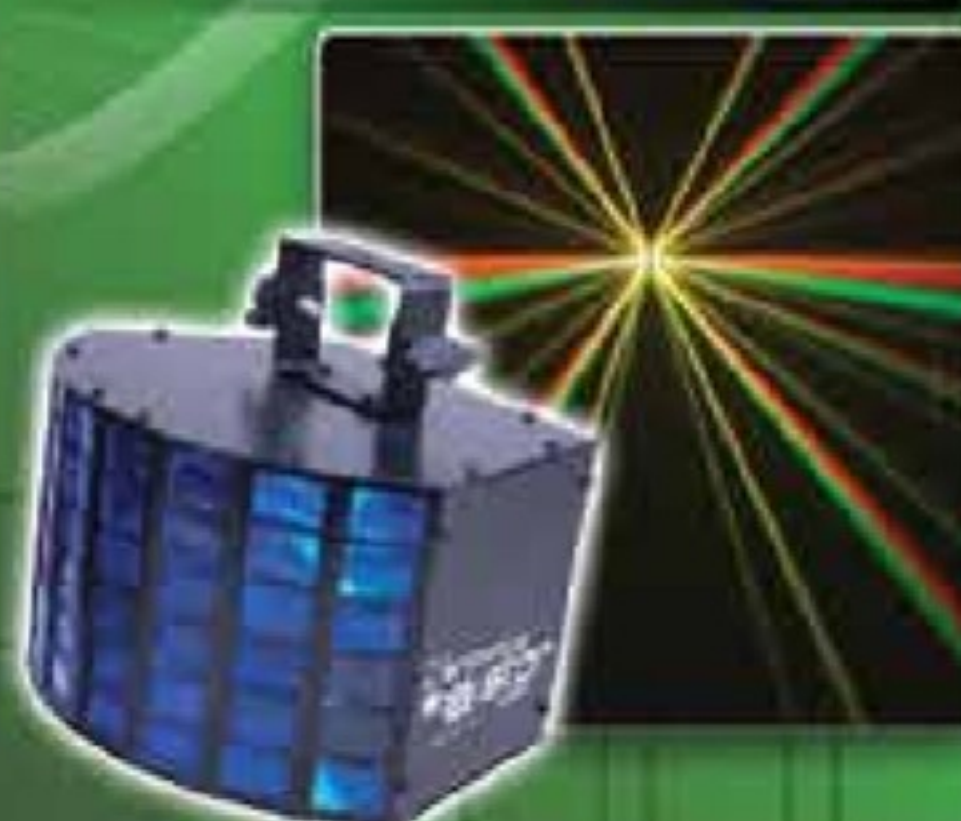
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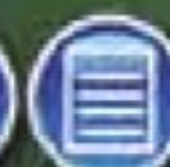
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